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MORANG'S LITERATURE SERIES

Selections from The Nature Poets

EDITED WITH NOTES BY

ANDREW STEVENSON, B.A.

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INTRODUCTION

NATURE STUDY AND POETRY

The introduction of Nature Study into the already crowded curriculum of our schools, excellent as that measure on the whole may be, would be deplorable if in any case the æsthetic and spiritual potentialities of the subject should be overlooked or ignored, and the attention and effort of teacher and students confined to the mere acquisition of knowledge. That there is a danger of this result is evident from the common tendency to identify Nature Study with elementary science. This it is, but it is much more. Nature Study will be so far a dismal failure as a means of education if it does not quicken the sense of beauty in our young people, thus increasing their sources and means of simple happiness and giving them a refinement of feeling and a joy in living which they would not otherwise possess. Moreover, some care should be taken to cultivate the sense of awe and reverence which the contemplation of nature in its sublime aspects and operations is fitted to produce.

Three common mental states or conditions in relation to nature are depicted in the following passages. We have first the ordinary knowledge and indifferent feeling of a certain Peter Bell, as described by Wordsworth :

> "A primrose by a river's brim,
> A yellow primrose was to him,
> And it was nothing more."

Next we have from Emerson a description of the mental attitude and kind of attainment characterising some students of science :

> "But these young scholars who invade our hills,
> Bold as the engineer who fells the wood,
> And travelling often in the cut he makes,

Love not the flower they pluck, and know it not,
And all their botany is Latin names.
. . . . . Our eyes
Are armed but we are strangers to the stars,
And strangers to the mystic beast and bird,
And strangers to the plant and to the mine."

Of a similar character seem to be the attitude and attainments of the professor in the following recent newspaper verses, which, however, serve to throw in bright relief the character of the child :

"See, grandpa, my flower!" she cried ;
"I found it in the grasses!"
And with a kindly smile the sage
Surveyed it through his glasses.

"Ah, yes," he said, "involucrate,
And all its florets ligulate.
Corolla gamopetalous,
Compositæ, exogenous—
A pretty specimen it is,
Taraxacum dens-leonis!"

She took the blossom back again,
His face a wistful eye on ;
"I thought," she said, with quivery lip,
"It was a dandelion."

The attainments of Peter Bell and of the students aforesaid, if not of the professor, seem to be of the same kind, differing only in degree, not in quality; for there is no evidence in the description, nor assurance from experience, that the finer nature of the students was developed any farther than that of Peter Bell. Nor is it to be supposed that Peter Bell would be any better educated, in the higher sense of the term, if he could identify every plant that grows as readily as he could the yellow primrose, or that the students similarly would be any better educated if they could describe and classify all these plants as fully as the professor did the dandelion. No, no, such acquisition of knowledge, while progress, to be sure, is but progress on the same level.

But when we come to the description of the child we are on a higher level and in a purer atmosphere.

In the study of nature the kingdom of heaven opens only to those who become as little children, and the best the teacher can do is to broaden and deepen the tender susceptibility to the beauty and sublimity of nature which all children, in some measure, already possess. All details of knowledge that do not contribute to this end are of secondary importance as material for education, and would be too dearly purchased at the sacrifice of æsthetic and spiritual development.

Many scientific men have recognised this fact. Darwin regretted that close and long-continued application to purely scientific investigations had in a measure destroyed his power of appreciating the beautiful. But Professors Chapman and Ellis, of the scientific department of the Toronto University, have shown by the poems they have written that scientific studies may be carried on without destroying the poetic spirit,—so indeed as even to nurture it. Then the prose sketches of Grant Allan, John Burroughs, and Richard Jefferies are as interesting as a romance, without the fabulous matter which gives an interest of questionable value to some of the nature stories of the da[illegible].

It is to the poets, however, that we must look for the highest presentation in literature of appreciation of nature, and all teachers of ature Studies should equip themselves for the finer part of their work by a careful perusal of the best nature poetr . Of this there is no lack in the writings of Cowper and Wordsworth among British poets, Bryant, Emerson and Lowell among American, and Lampman, Campbell, Roberts, and Miss Wetherald, among Canadian. Of these and many others we may say as Wordsworth said of his predecessors :

> "Blessings be with them and eternal praise,
> Who have given us nobler loves and nobler cares,—
> The Poets, who on earth have made us heirs
> Of truth and pure delight by heavenly lays."

THE NATURE POETS

THE SPRING FLIGHT OF THE WILD GEESE

Hark
Where yon wedged line the nestor[1] leads,
Steering north with raucous cry
Through tracts and provinces of sky,
Every night alighting down
In new landscapes of romance,
Where darkling feed the clamorous clans
By lonely lakes to men unknown.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

THE FIRST SKYLARK OF SPRING

This poem is reproduced from *Poems* by William Watson, by the kind permission of the author and of the publisher, Mr. John Lane, London.

Two worlds hast thou to dwell in, Sweet,—
The virginal, untroubled sky,
And this vexed region at my feet.—
Alas, but one have I!

To all my songs there clings the shade,
The dulling shade, of mundane care.
They amid mortal mists are made,—
Thine, in immortal air.

My heart is dashed with griefs and fears;
My song comes fluttering, and is gone.
O high above the home of tears,
Eternal Joy, sing on!

1 **Nestor**—The oldest and wisest among the Greek leaders in the war against Troy.

Not loftiest bard, of mightiest mind,
Shall ever chant a note so pure,
Till he can cast this earth behind
And breathe in heaven secure.

* * * * * * *

Thy spirit knows nor bounds nor bars;
On thee no shreds of thraldom hang;
Not more enlarged,[1] the morning stars
Their great Te Deum[2] sang.

But I am fettered to the sod,
And but forget my bonds an hour;
In amplitude of dreams a god,
A slave in dearth of power.

And fruitless knowledge clouds my soul,
And fretful ignorance irks it more.
Thou sing'st as if thou knew'st the whole,
And lightly held'st thy lore!

Somewhat as thou, Man once could sing,
In porches of the lucent morn,[3]
Ere he had felt his lack of wing,
Or cursed his iron bourn.

The springtime bubbled in his throat,
The sweet sky seemed not far above,
And young and lovesome came the note;—
Ah, thine is Youth and Love!

1 **Enlarged**—Free.
2 **Te Deum**—Anthem of Praise.
3 When in a state of primeval innocence and happiness.

Thou sing'st of what he knew of old,
  And dreamlike from afar recalls;
In flashes of forgotten gold
  An orient glory falls.

And as he listens, one by one
  Life's utmost splendours blaze more nigh;
Less inaccessible the sun,
  Less alien grows the sky.

For thou art native to the spheres,
  And of the courts of heaven art free,
And carriest to his temporal ears
  News from eternity;

And lead'st him to the dizzy verge,
  And lur'st him o'er the dazzling line,
Where mortal and immortal merge,
  And human dies divine.

WILLIAM WATSON.

TO THE CUCKOO

O blithe New-comer! I have heard,
I hear thee and rejoice.
O Cuckoo! shall I call thee Bird,
Or but a wandering Voice?

While I am lying on the grass,
Thy twofold shout I hear;
From hill to hill it seems to pass,
At once far off, and near.

Though babbling only to the Vale
  Of sunshine and of flowers,
Thou bringest unto me a tale
  Of visionary hours.

Thrice welcome, darling of the Spring!
  Even yet thou art to me
No bird, but an invisible thing,
  A voice, a mystery;

The same whom in my schoolboy days
  I listened to; that cry
Which made me look a thousand ways
  In bush, and tree, and sky.

To seek thee did I often rove
  Through woods and on the green;
And thou wert still a hope, a love;
  Still longed for, never seen.

And I can listen to thee yet;
  Can lie upon the plain
And listen, till I do beget
  That golden time again.

O blessèd Bird! the earth we pace
  Again appears to be
An unsubstantial, faery place;
  That is fit home for Thee!

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

TO THE CUCKOO

Hail, beauteous stranger of the grove!
Thou messenger of spring!
Now Heaven repairs thy rural seat,
And woods thy welcome sing.

What time the daisy decks the green,
Thy certain voice we hear.
Hast thou a star to guide thy path,
Or mark the rolling year?

Delightful visitant! with thee
I hail the time of flowers,
And hear the sound of music sweet
From birds among the bowers.

The school-boy, wandering through the wood
To pull the primrose gay,
Starts, the new voice of Spring to hear,
And imitates thy lay.

What time the pea puts on the bloom,
Thou fliest[1] thy vocal vale,
An annual guest in other lands,
Another spring to hail.

Sweet bird! thy bower is ever green,
Thy sky is ever clear;
Thou hast no sorrow in thy song,
No winter in thy year!

[1] **Fliest**—Departest from.

Oh, could I fly, I'd fly with thee!
We'd make, with joyful wing,
Our annual visit o'er the globe,
Companions of the Spring.

JOHN LOGAN.

THE OWL

In the hollow tree, in the old gray tower,
The spectral owl doth dwell;
Dull, hated, despised, in the sunshine hour,
But at dusk he 's abroad and well!
Not a bird of the forest e'er mates with him;
All mock him outright by day;
But at night, when the woods grow still and dim,
The boldest will shrink away!
O, when the night falls, and roosts the fowl,
Then, then, is the reign of the hornèd owl!

And the owl hath a bride, who is fond and bold,
And loveth the wood's deep gloom;
And, with eyes like the shine of the moonstone cold,
She awaiteth her ghastly groom;
Not a feather she moves, not a carol she sings,
As she waits in her tree so still;
But when her heart heareth his flapping wings,
She hoots out her welcome shrill!
O, when the moon shines, and dogs do howl,
Then, then, is the joy of the hornèd owl

Mourn not for the owl, nor his gloomy plight!
The owl hath his share of good;

If a prisoner he be in the broad daylight,
He is lord in the dark greenwood!
Nor lonely the bird, nor his ghastly mate,
They are each unto each a pride;
Thrice fonder, perhaps, since a strange, dark fate
Hath rent them from all beside!

So, when the night falls, and dogs do howl,
Sing, ho! for the reign of the hornèd owl!
We know not alway
Who are kings by day,
But the king of the night is the bold brown owl!

BRYAN WALLER PROCTER (BARRY CORNWALL).

THE CROW

With rakish eye and plenished crop,
Oblivious of the farmer's gun,
Upon the naked ash-tree top
The Crow sits basking in the sun.

An old ungainly rogue, I wot!
For, perched in black against the blue,
His feathers torn with beak and shot,
Let woful glints of April through.

The year's new grass, and, golden-eyed,
The daisies sparkle underneath,
And chestnut-trees on either side
Have opened every ruddy sheath.

But doubtful still of frost and snow,
The ash alone stands stark and bare,
And on its topmost twig the Crow
Takes the glad morning's sun and air.

WILLIAM CANTON.

THE SANDPIPER

Across the narrow beach we flit,
One little sandpiper and I;
And fast I gather, bit by bit,
The scattered driftwood bleached and dry.
The wild waves reach their hands for it,
The wild wind raves, the tide runs high,
As up and down the beach we flit,—
One little sandpiper and I.

Above our heads the sullen clouds
Scud black and swift across the sky;
Like silent ghosts in misty shrouds
Stand out the white light-houses high.
Almost as far as eye can reach
I see the close-reefed vessels fly,
As fast we flit along the beach,—
One little sandpiper and I.

I watch him as he skims along,
Uttering his sweet and mournful cry:
He starts not at my fitful song,
Or flash of fluttering drapery;
He has no thought of any wrong,

He scans me with a fearless eye.
Stanch friends are we, well-tried and strong,
The little sandpiper and I.

Comrade, where wilt thou be to-night
When the loosed storm breaks furiously?
My driftwood-fire will burn so bright!
To what warm shelter canst thou fly?
I do not fear for thee, though wroth
The tempest rushes through the sky:
For are we not God's children both,
Thou, little sandpiper, and I?

CELIA THAXTER.

THE EAGLE

A FRAGMENT

He clasps the crag with hooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ringed with the azure world he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON.

THE MOCKING-BIRD

From *Evangeline*

Then from a neighbouring thicket the mocking-bird, wildest of singers
Swinging aloft on a willow spray that hung o'er the water,

Shook from his little throat such floods of delirious
music,
That the whole air and the woods and the waves
seemed silent to listen.
Plaintive at first were the tones and sad, then soaring
to madness
Seemed they to follow or guide the revel of frenzied
Bacchantes.
Single notes were then heard, in sorrowful, low
lamentation;
Till, having gathered them all, he flung them abroad
in derision,
As when, after a storm, a gust of wind through the
tree-tops
Shakes down the rattling rain in a crystal shower
on the branches.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

THE CHICKADEE

From *The Titmouse*

You shall not be over bold
When you deal with arctic cold,
As late I found my lukewarm blood
Chilled wading in the snow-choked wood....

Up and away for life! be fleet!—
The frost-king ties my fumbling feet,
Sings in my ears, my hands are stones,
Curdles the blood to the marble bones,

Tugs at the heart-strings, numbs the sense,
And hems in life with narrowing fence....
When piped a tiny voice hard by,
Gay and polite, a cheerful cry,
Chic-chicadeedee! saucy note
Out of sound heart and merry throat,
As if it said, "Good day, good sir!
Fine afternoon, old passenger!
Happy to meet you in these places,
Where January brings few faces."
Here was this atom in full breath,
Hurling defiance at vast death;
This scrap of valour just for play
Fronts the north-wind in waistcoat grey.
* * * * * * *
For well the soul, if stout within,
Can arm impregnably the skin.
* * * * * * *
With glad remembrance of my debt,
I homeward turn; farewell, my pet!

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

TO A WINTER BIRD

A starry sheen now fills the bloomless earth,
Summer hath gone, and gone the delicate rose
With perfumed petals sunk in deepening snows,
Faded and dumb the emerald fields of mirth,
Where the wild warbler used to tune his pipe, at birth
Of Spring, with glad melodious song.
What wonder that the yearning heart is sad
When Winter comes and Autumn days are dead!

When song and bloom and gladdening days are fled!
Where are the joyous scenes that Summer had?
And where the bright-winged birds that singing were so glad?
They sought the radiant South, long, long
Ago, for warmer haunts of song;
But thou, swift-winged bird of snows and winds,
Thou tender messenger of love,
Comest like Noah's wandering dove
With olive branch of hope to weary minds
When all is gloom below, above!
Thou hast not known Spring on the hill's green side;
The Summer sunshine, shade, and crystal streams,
And misty Autumn's melancholy dreams;
Nor seen them fade, nor asked, "Can aught abide?"
Nor wept sad tears for loves that with them sighing died.
I know not what the future hath—
Narrow or heavy-tangled path,
Failure and grief and death must be my lot;[1]
Yet hidden power that dwells in thee
Will surely lead me tenderly,
More than the south-born bird thy life hath taught
Me hope and love's infinity.

PHILLIPS STEWART.

BIRD MUSIC

From *The Merchant of Venice*

The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark
When neither is attended,[2] and I think

[1] The poet was afflicted with an incurable malady, which ended in his untimely and much-lamented death.

[2] **Attended**—Attended to.

The nightingale, if she should sing by day,
When every goose is cackling, would be thought
No better a musician than the wren.
How many things by season seasoned[1] are
To their right praise and true perfection!

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

BIRD HARMONIES

From *The Task*

Nature inanimate employs sweet sounds,
But animated nature sweeter still,
To soothe and satisfy the human ear.
Ten thousand warblers cheer the day, and one
The livelong night: nor these alone, whose notes
Nice-finger'd art must emulate in vain,
But cawing rooks, and kites that swim sublime
In still[2] repeated circles, screaming loud;
The jay, the pie, and even the boding owl
That hails the rising moon, have charms for me.
Sounds inharmonious in themselves, and harsh,
Yet heard in scenes where peace forever reigns,
And only there, please highly for their sake.

WILLIAM COWPER.

THE DOG

"Grotesque!" we said, the moment we espied him,
For there he stood, supreme in his conceit,

[1] **Seasoned**—Rendered agreeable.
[2] **Still**—Ever.

With short ears close together and queer feet
Planted irregularly: first we tried him
With jokes, but they were lost: we then defied him
With bantering questions and loose criticism:
He did not like, I'm sure, our catechism,
But whisked and snuffed a little as we eyed him.
Then flung we balls, and out and clear away,
Up the white slope, across the crusted snow,
To where a broken fence stands in the way
Against the sky-line, a mere row of pegs,
Quicker than thought we saw him flash and go,
A straight mad scuttling of four crooked legs.

ARCHIBALD LAMPMAN.

TO MY CAT

Half loving-kindliness and half disdain,
Thou comest to my call serenely suave,
With humming speech and gracious gestures grave,
In salutation courtly and urbane;
Yet must I humble me thy grace to gain,
For wiles may win thee though no arts enslave,
And nowhere gladly thou abidest save
Where nought disturbs the concord of thy reign.
Sphinx of my quiet hearth! who deign'st to dwell
Friend of my toil, companion of mine ease,
Thine is the lore of Ra[1] and Rameses[2];
That men forget dost thou remember well,
Beholden still in blinking reveries
With sombre sea-green gaze inscrutable.

ROSAMUND MARRIOTT WATSON.

1 **Ra**—An ancient Egyptian divinity.
2 **Rameses**—An ancient Egyptian king and dynasty.

SHEEP IN THE PASTURE

From *The Task*

The sheepfold here
Pours out its fleecy tenants o'er the glebe,
At first, progressive as a stream, they seek
The middle field; but scattered by degrees,
Each to his choice, soon whiten all the land.

WILLIAM COWPER.

TO A MOUSE

ON TURNING HER UP IN HER NEST WITH THE PLOUGH, NOVEMBER, 1785

Wee, sleekit, cowerin', timorous beastie,
O, what a panic 's in thy breastie!
Thou needna start awa sae hasty,
Wi' bickering[1] brattle[2]!
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee,
Wi' murdering pattle[3]!

I'm truly sorry man's dominion
Has broken nature's social union,
An' justifies that ill opinion
Which makes thee startle
At me, thy poor earth-born companion,
An' fellow-mortal!

1 **Bicker**—To move quickly and unsteadily, or with a pattering noise.

2 **Brattle**—A short race.

3 **Pattle**—A kind of long-handled spade for cleaning the ploughshare.

I doubtna, whyles, but thou may thieve;
What then? poor beastie, thou maun[1] live!
A daimen-icker[2] in a thrave[3]
'S a sma' request;
I'll get a blessin' wi' the lave,[4]
And never miss 't!

Thy wee bit housie, too, in ruin!
Its silly[5] wa's the win's are strewin'!
An' naething now to big[6] a new ane
O' foggage[7] green!
An' bleak December's winds ensuin',
Baith snell[8] and keen!

Thou saw the fields laid bare an' waste,
An' weary winter comin' fast,
An' cozie here, beneath the blast,
Thou thought to dwell,
Till, crash! the cruel coulter past
Out through thy cell.

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble
Has cost thee mony a weary nibble!
Now thou's turned out, for a' thy trouble,
But[9] house or hald,[10]

1 **Maun**—Must.
2 **Daimen-icker**—An ear of grain now and then.
3 **Thrave**—Twenty-four sheaves.
4 **Lave**—Rest, remainder.
5 **Silly**—Frail.
6 **Big**—Build.
7 **Foggage**—Herbage.
8 **Snell**—Bitter.
9 **But**—Without.
10 **Hald**—An abiding-place.

To thole[1] the winter's sleety dribble,
An' cranreuch[2] cauld!

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane,[3]
In proving foresight may be vain:
The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men
Gang[4] aft a-gley,[5]
An' lea'e us naught but grief and pain,
For promised joy.

Still thou art blest, compared wi' me!
The present only toucheth thee:
But, Och! I backward cast my e'e
On prospects drear;
An' forward, though I canna see,
I guess an' fear.

ROBERT BURNS.

THE SQUIRREL

Drawn from his refuge in some lonely elm
That age or injury has hollow'd deep,
Where, on his bed of wool and matted leaves,
He has outslept the winter, ventures forth
To frisk a while, and bask in the warm sun,
The squirrel, flippant, pert, and full of play.
He sees me, and at once, swift as a bird,
Ascends the neighbouring beech; there whisks his brush,

1 **Thole**—Endure.
2 **Cranreuch**—Hoar-frost.
3 **No thy lane**—Not alone.
4 **Gang**—Go.
5 **A-gley**—Wrong.

And perks his ears, and stamps and scolds aloud,
With all the prettiness of feign'd alarm,
And anger insignificantly fierce.

WILLIAM COWPER.

THE TIGER

Tiger! Tiger! burning bright,
In the forests of the night;
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burned the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, and what art,
Could twist the sinews of thine heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? and what dread feet?

What the hammer, what the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,
And watered heaven with their tears,
Did He smile His work to see?
Did He, who made the Lamb, make thee!

Tiger! Tiger! burning bright,
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

WILLIAM BLAKE.

THE BEHEMOTH[1]

From *The Book of Job*, Chap. XL.

Behold now behemoth,
Which I made with thee;
He eateth grass as an ox.
Lo now, his strength *is* in his loins,
* * * * * * * *
He moveth his tail like a cedar;
* * * * * * * *
His bones are as strong pieces of brass;
His bones are like bars of iron.
He is the chief of the ways of God:
He that made him
Can make his sword to approach *unto him*.
Surely the mountains bring him forth food,
Where all the beasts of the field play.
He lieth under the shady trees,
In the covert of the reed, and fens.
The shady trees cover him *with* their shadow;
The willows of the brook
Compass him about.
Behold he drinketh up a river,
And hasteth not:

[1] **Behemoth**—The hippopotamus.

He trusteth that he can draw up Jordan
Into his mouth.
He taketh it with his eyes :
His nose pierceth through snares.

THE LEVIATHAN[1]

From *The Book of Job*, Chap. XLI.

Canst thou draw out leviathan
With an hook?
Or his tongue with a cord
Which thou lettest down?
Canst thou put an hook into his nose?
Or bore his jaw through with a thorn?
Will he make many supplications unto thee?
Will he speak soft *words* unto thee?
Will he make a covenant with thee?
Wilt thou take him for a servant forever?
Wilt thou play with him as *with* a bird?
Or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens?
Shall the companions make a banquet of him?
Shall they part him among the merchants?
Canst thou fill his skin with barbed irons?
Or his head with fish spears?
Lay thine hand upon him,
Remember the battle, do no more.
Behold, the hope of him is in vain:
Shall not one be cast down
Even at the sight of him?
None is so fierce that dare stir him up:

1 **Leviathan**—It is not certainly known which animal is intended, the crocodile or the whale.

Who then is able to stand before me?
Who hath prevented me,
That I should repay *him?*
Whatsoever is under the whole heaven
Is mine.
I will not conceal his parts,
Nor his power, nor his comely proportions.
Who can discover the face of his garment?
Or who can come to *him*
With his double bridle?
Who can open the door of his face?
His teeth *are* terrible round about.
His scales *are his* pride,
Shut up together *as with* a close seal.
One is so near to another,
That no air can come between them.
They are joined one to another,
They stick together,
That they cannot be sundered.
By his neesings[1] a light doth shine,
And his eyes *are* like the eyelids
Of the morning.
Out of his mouth go burning lamps,
And sparks of fire leap out.
Out of his nostrils goeth smoke,
As *out* of a seething pot or caldron.
His breath kindleth coals,
And a flame goeth out of his mouth.
In his neck remaineth strength,
And sorrow is turned into joy before him.
The flakes of his flesh are joined together:
They are firm in themselves;

[1] **Neesings**—Sneezing.

They cannot be moved.
His heart is as firm as a stone;
Yea, as hard as a piece
Of the nether *millstone.*
When he raiseth up himself,
The mighty are afraid:
The sword of him that layeth at him
Cannot hold:
The spear, the dart, nor the habergeon.
He esteemeth iron as straw,
And brass as rotten wood.
The arrow cannot make him flee:
Slingstones are turned with him
Into stubble.
Darts are counted as stubble:
He laugheth at the shaking of a spear.
Sharp stones *are* under him,
He spreadeth sharp pointed things
Upon the mire.
He maketh the deep to boil like a pot:
He maketh the sea like a pot of ointment.
He maketh a path to shine after him;
One would think the deep *to be* hoary.
Upon earth there is not his like,
Who is made without fear.
He beholdeth all high *things:*
He *is* a king over all the children of pride.

* * * * * * * *

THE HUMBLE-BEE

Burly, dozing humble-bee!
Where thou art is clime for me ;

Let them sail for Porto Rique,
Far-off heats through seas to seek,
I will follow thee alone,
Thou animated torrid zone!
Zigzag steerer, desert cheerer,
Let me chase thy waving lines;
Keep me nearer, me thy hearer,
Singing over shrubs and vines.

Insect lover of the sun,
Joy of thy dominion!
Sailor of the atmosphere;
Swimmer through the waves of air,
Voyager of light and noon,
Epicurean[1] of June!
Wait, I prithee, till I come
Within earshot of thy hum,—
All without is martyrdom.

When the south-wind, in May days,
With a net of shining haze
Silvers the horizon wall;
And, with softness touching all,
Tints the human countenance
With the colour of romance;[2]
And infusing subtle[3] heats
Turns the sod to violets,—
Thou in sunny solitudes,
Rover of the underwoods,
The green silence dost displace
With thy mellow breezy bass.

1 **Epicurean**—A pleasure seeker.
2 **Colour of romance**—Unusual beauty.
3 **Subtle**—So slight as to be scarcely perceptible.

Hot midsummer's petted crone,
Sweet to me thy drowsy tone
Tells of countless sunny hours,
Long days, and solid banks of flowers;
Of gulfs of sweetness without bound,
In Indian[1] wildernesses found;
Of Syrian peace, immortal leisure,
Firmest cheer, and bird-like pleasure.

Aught unsavory or unclean
Hath my insect never seen;
But violets, and bilberry bells,
Maple sap, and daffodils,
Grass with green flag half-mast high,
Succory[2] to match the sky,
Columbine with horn of honey,
Scented fern, and agrimony,
Clover, catchfly, adder's-tongue,
And brier-roses, dwelt among:
All beside was unknown waste,
All was picture as he passed.

Wiser far than human seer,
Yellow-breeched philosopher.
Seeing only what is fair,
Sipping only what is sweet,
Thou dost mock at fate and care,
Leave the chaff and take the wheat.
When the fierce northwestern blast
Cools sea and land so far and fast,—

1 "India" was long a synonym for richness and luxury.

2 The blossoms of the succory or chicory are of a very beautiful blue.

Thou already slumberest deep;
Woe and want thou canst outsleep;
Want and woe, which torture us,
Thy sleep makes ridiculous.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

TO THE KATYDID[1]

I love to hear thine earnest voice,
  Wherever thou art hid,
Thou testy little dogmatist,
  Thou pretty Katydid!
Thou mindest me of gentlefolks,—
  Old gentlefolks are they,—
Thou say'st an undisputed thing
  In such a solemn way.

Thou art a female, Katydid!
  I know it by the trill
That quivers through thy piercing notes,
  So petulant and shrill.
I think there is a knot of you
  Beneath the hollow tree,—
A knot of spinster Katydids,—
  Do Katydids drink tea?

Oh, tell me where did Katy live,
  And what did Katy do?
And was she very fair and young,
  And yet so wicked too?
Did Katy love a naughty man,

1 **Katydid**—A large green locust.

Or kiss more cheeks than one?
I warrant Katy did no more
Than many a Kate has done.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

THE GRASSHOPPER AND THE CRICKET

The poetry of earth is never dead;
When all the birds are faint with the hot sun
And hide in cooling trees, a voice will run
From hedge to hedge about the new-mown mead.
That is the grasshopper's,—he takes the lead
In summer luxury,—he has never done
With his delights; for, when tired out with fun,
He rests at ease beneath some pleasant weed.
The poetry of earth is ceasing never.
On a lone winter evening, when the frost
Has wrought a silence, from the stove there shrills
The cricket's song, in warmth increasing ever,
And seems, to one in drowsiness half lost,
The grasshopper's among some grassy hills.

JOHN KEATS.

TO THE GRASSHOPPER AND THE CRICKET

Green little vaulter in the sunny grass,
Catching your heart up at the feel of June,—
Sole voice that's heard amidst the lazy noon,
When even the bees lag at the summoning brass[1];
And you, warm little housekeeper, who class

[1] Brass kettles and tin pans were beaten to induce an escaping swarm of bees to alight so as to be hived.

With those who think the candles come too soon,
Loving the fire, and with your tricksome tune
Nick the glad silent moments as they pass!
O sweet and tiny cousins, that belong,
One to the fields, the other to the hearth,
Both have your sunshine; both, though small, are
strong
At your clear hearts; and both seem given to earth
To sing in thoughtful ears this natural song,—
In doors and out, summer and winter, mirth.

LEIGH HUNT.

THE GRASSHOPPERS

From *Sursum*

The Alpine pasture stirs
With rattling grasshoppers,
Some green, some gold, some grey with crimson wings;
Antic[1] or grim or fair,
They glitter everywhere.
Without a path or aim, like foolish sentient things.

On stiff legs issuing forth
They fling to greet the North,
But veer by South in air, and perch by West;
Nor o'er those horny eyes
Floats shadow of surprise
To find the impelling hope so instantly repressed.

EDMUND GOSSE.

[1] **Antic**—Fantastic, grotesque.

THE TOAD

Old fellow loiterer, whither wouldst thou go?
The lonely eve is ours,
When tides of richer fragrance ooze and flow
From heavy-lidded flowers.

With solemn hampered pace proceeding by
The dewy garden bed,
Like some old priest in antique finery,
Stiff cope and jewelled head;

Thy sanctuary lamps are lit at dusk,
Where leafy isles are dim;
The bat's shrill piccolo,[1] the swinging musk
Blend with the beetle's hymn.

Ay, something paramount and priestly too,
Some cynic mystery,
Lurks in thy dull skin with its dismal hue,
Thy bright ascetic eye;

Thou seemest the heir of centuries, hatched out
With æons[2] on thy track;
The dusk of ages compasses about
Thy lean and shrivelled back.

Thy heaving throat, thy sick repulsive glance
Still awes thy foes around;
The eager hound starts back and looks askance,
And, whining, paws the ground.

[1] **Piccolo**—A small flute with a high, somewhat piercing tone.
[2] **Æon**—A period of immeasurable duration.

Yet thou hast forfeited thy ancient ban,[1]
Thy mystical control;
We know thee now to be the friend of man,
A simple homely soul;

And when we deemed thee curiously wise,
Still chewing venomed paste,
Thou didst but crush the limbs of juicy flies
With calm and critic taste.

By the grey stone half-sunk in mossy mould,
Beside the stiff box-hedge,
Thou slumberest, when the dawn with fingers cold
Plucks at the low cloud's edge.

O royal life! in some cool cave all day,
Dreaming old dreams, to lie,
Or peering up to see the larkspur sway
Above thee in the sky;

Or wandering when the sunset airs are cool
Beside the elm-tree's foot,
To splash and sink in some sequestered pool
Amid the cresses' root.

Abhorred, despised, the sad wind o'er thee sings;
Thou hast no friend to fear,
Yet fashioned in the secret mint of things
And bidden to be here.

Man dreams of loveliness, and bids it be;
To truth his eye is dim.
Thou wert, because the spirit dreamed of thee
And thou art born of him.

ARTHUR CHRISTOPHER BENSON.

[1] The toad was formerly believed to have supernatural powers for evil, and was employed by those who professed witchcraft.

THE HOUSEKEEPER

The frugal snail, with forecast of repose,
Carries his house with him where'er he goes;
Peeps out,—and if there comes a shower of rain,
Retreats to his small domicile again.
Touch but a tip of him, a horn,—'tis well,—
He curls up in his sanctuary shell.
He 's his own landlord, his own tenant; stay
Long as he will, he dreads no Quarter Day.[1]
Himself he boards and lodges; both invites
And feasts himself; sleeps with himself o' nights.
He spares the upholsterer trouble to procure
Chattels; himself is his own furniture,
And his sole riches. Wheresoe'er he roam,—
Knock when you will,—he 's sure to be at home.

CHARLES LAMB.

THE CHAMBERED NAUTILUS[2]

This is the ship of pearl, which, poets feign,
Sails the unshadowed main,—
The venturous bark that flings
On the sweet summer wind its purpled wings
In gulfs enchanted, where the Siren[3] sings,
And coral reefs lie bare,
Where the cold sea-maids rise to sun their streaming hair.

[1] **Quarter Day**—Rent day, rent being paid every three months.

[2] **Nautilus**—A kind of shell-fish which was supposed to be provided with a membrane which served as a sail. Its shell was spiral, symmetrical, and chambered.

[3] **Siren**—A fabled sea-nymph noted for its beautiful singing.

Its webs of living gauze no more unfurl;
Wrecked is the ship of pearl!
And every chambered cell,
Where its dim dreaming life was wont to dwell,
As the frail tenant shaped his growing shell,
Before thee lies revealed,—
Its irised ceiling rent, its sunless crypt[1] unsealed!

Year after year beheld the silent toil
That spread his lustrous coil;
Still, as the spiral grew,
He left the past year's dwelling for the new,
Stole with soft step its shining archway through,
Built up its idle door,
Stretched in his last-found home, and knew the old no more.

Thanks for the heavenly message brought by thee,
Child of the wandering sea,
Cast from her lap, forlorn[2]!
From thy dead lips a clearer note is born
Than ever Triton[3] blew from wreathèd horn!
While on mine ear it rings,
Through the deep caves of thought I hear a voice that sings:—

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,

[1] **Crypt**—A hidden chamber.
[2] **Forlorn**—Abandoned, deserted.
[3] **Triton**—A fabled sea demi-god.

Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

BEAUTY AND DESIGN IN NATURE

From *Song of Myself*

Oxen that rattle the yoke and chain, or halt in the leafy shade,
What is that you express in your eyes?
It seems to me more than all the print I have read in my life.
My tread scares the wood-drake and wood-duck
On my distant and day-long ramble;
They rise together, they slowly circle around.
I believe in these winged purposes,
And acknowledge, red, yellow, white, playing within me,
And consider green and violet and the tufted crown intentional,
And do not call the tortoise unworthy because she is not something else,
And the jay in the woods never studied the gamut, yet he trills pretty well to me,
And the look of the bay mare shames silliness out of me.

WALT WHITMAN.

ON CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

From *The Task*

I would not enter on my lists of friends
(Though graced with polish'd manners and fine sense,
Yet wanting sensibility) the man
Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm.
An inadvertent step may crush the snail
That crawls at evening in the public path;
But he that has humanity, forewarn'd,
Will tread aside and let the reptile live.
The creeping vermin, loathsome to the sight,
And charged perhaps with venom, that intrudes,
A visitor unwelcome, into scenes
Sacred to neatness and repose, the alcove,
The chamber, or refectory, may die:
A necessary act incurs no blame.
Not so when, held within their proper bounds,
And guiltless of offence, they range the air,
Or take their pastime in the spacious field:
There they are privileged; and he that hunts
Or harms them there is guilty of a wrong,
Disturbs the economy of nature's realm,
Who when she form'd, design'd them an abode.
The sum is this: if man's convenience, health,
Or safety interfere, his rights and claims
Are paramount, and must extinguish theirs.
Else they are all—the meanest things that are,
As free to live and to enjoy that life,
As God was free to form them at the first,
Who in His sovereign wisdom made them all.
Ye therefore who love mercy, teach your sons
To love it too.

WILLIAM COWPER.

THE MISSION OF FLOWERS

From *Ode: Intimations of Immortality*

Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows[1] can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

THE WONDERS OF NATURE

From *Song of Myself*

A morning-glory at my window satisfies me more
than the metaphysics[2] of books.
I believe a leaf of grass is no less than the journey-
work[3] of the stars,
And the tree-toad is a chef-d'œuvre[4] for the highest,
And the running blackberry would adorn the parlors
of heaven,
And the narrowest hinge in my hand puts to scorn
all machinery,
And the cow crunching with depressed head surpasses
any statue.

WALT WHITMAN.

THE SUNFLOWERS

When lamps are out and voices fled,
And moonlight floods the earth like rain,
I steal outside and cross the lane

[1] **Blows**—Blooms.
[2] **Metaphysics**—The word here signifies learning in general.
[3] **Journey-work**—Skilled workmanship.
[4] **Chef-d'œuvre**—Masterpiece.

And stand beside the sunflower bed;
Each blind, unopen face is turned
To where the western glories burned,
As though the sun might come again,
With some last word he left unsaid.

When Dawn with slender shining hand
Inscribes a message on the wall,
I follow at the silent call
To where my tall sun-lovers stand.
Their wistful heads are lifted high
Toward the flaming eastern sky,
As though some voice had turned them all,
Some secret voice of strong command.

Ah, should I from the windowed height
Keep vigil in the room above,
And see them lightly, surely move
Through the still stretches of the night,
Would not the heart within me burn,
As loyally I watched them turn,
With sweet undoubting faith and love
From vanished light to dawning light?

ETHELWYN WETHERALD.

THE DAISY

From *The Legend of Good Women*

Of all the floures in the mede,
Than love I most these floures white and rede,
Soch that men callen daisies in our town;

To 'hem[1] I have so great affection,
As I said erst, whan comen is the May,
That in my bedde there daweth[2] me no day
That I nam[3] up and walking in the mede,
To seene this floure ayenst the Sunne sprede,
Whan it up riseth early by the morrow,
That blissful sight softeneth all my sorrow,
So glad am I, whan that I have the presence
Of it, to done it all reverence,
And ever I love it, and ever ylike newe,
And ever shall, till that mine herte die.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

TO A MOUNTAIN DAISY

ON TURNING ONE DOWN WITH THE PLOUGH, IN APRIL, 1786

Wee, modest, crimson-tippèd flower,
Thou's met me in an evil hour,
For I maun[4] crush amang the stoure[5]
Thy slender stem;
To spare thee now is past my power,
Thou bonny gem.

Alas! it's no thy neebor sweet,
The bonnie lark, companion meet,
Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet,[6]

1 **'Hem**—Them, appears in dialect as 'em.
2 **Daweth**—Dawneth.
3 **Nam**—Am not.
4 **Maun**—Must.
5 **Stoure**—Dust.
6 **Weet**—Wetness.

Wi' speckled breast,
When upward springing, blithe, to greet
The purpling east!

Cauld blew the bitter biting north
Upon thy early, humble birth;
Yet cheerfully thou glinted forth
Amid the storm,
Scarce reared above the parent earth
Thy tender form.

The flaunting flowers our gardens yield
High sheltering woods and wa's maun shield:
But thou beneath the random bield[1]
O' clod or stane,
Adorns the histie[2] stibble-field,
Unseen, alane.

There, in thy scanty mantle clad,
Thy snawie bosom sunward spread,
Thou lifts thy unassuming head
In humble guise;
But now the share uptears thy bed,
And low thou lies!

Such is the fate of simple bard,
On life's rough ocean luckless starr'd!
Unskilful he to note the card
Of prudent lore,[3]
Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,
And whelm him o'er!

1 **Bield**—Shelter.

2 **Histie**—Dry, barren.

3 **To note the card of prudent lore**—To follow the maxims of worldly wisdom.

Such fate to suffering worth is given,
Who long with wants and woes has striven,
By human pride or cunning driven
To misery's brink,
Till, wrenched of every stay but Heaven,
He, ruined, sink!

Even thou who mourn'st the Daisy's fate,
That fate is thine,—no distant date;
Stern Ruin's ploughshare drives, elate,
Full on thy bloom,
Till crushed beneath the furrow's weight
Shall be thy doom!

ROBERT BURNS.

TO THE DAISY

Bright Flower, whose home is everywhere,
Bold in maternal Nature's care,
And all the long year through the heir
Of joy or sorrow;
Methinks that there abides in thee
Some concord with humanity,
Given to no other flower I see
The forest thorough[1]!

Is it that Man is soon deprest?
A thoughtless Thing! who, once unblest,
Does little on his memory rest,
Or on his reason,
And Thou would'st teach him how to find

[1] Thorough—Old form of through.

A shelter under every wind,
A hope for times that are unkind
And every season?

Thou wander'st the wide world about,
Unchecked by pride or scrupulous doubt,
With friends to greet thee, or without,
Yet pleased and willing;
Meek, yielding to the occasion's call,
And all things suffering from all,
Thy (function) apostolical
In peace fulfilling.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

GRASS AND ROSES

From *The Gulistan* of Saadi.

I looked where the roses were blooming,
They stood among grasses and weeds;
I said, "Where such beauties are growing,
Why suffer these paltry weeds?"

Weeping, the poor things faltered:
"We have neither beauty nor bloom,
We are grass in the roses' garden,
But the Master gives us room.

"Slaves of a generous master,
Born from a world above,
We came to this place in His wisdom
We stay to this hour from His love.

"We have fed His humblest creatures,
We have served Him truly and long;
He gave no grace to our features,
We have neither colour nor song.

"Yet He who has made the flowers
Placed *us* on the self-same sod;
He knows our reason for being,—
We are grass in the garden of God."
Translated by JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE.

THE CORN AND THE LILIES

Said the corn to the lilies:
"Press not near my feet;
You are only idlers,
Neither corn nor wheat;
Does one earn a living
Just by being sweet?"

Naught answered the lilies,
Neither yea nor nay,
Only they grew sweeter
All the livelong day;
And at last the Teacher
Chanced to come that way.

While His tired disciples
Rested at His feet,
And the proud corn rustled,
Bidding them to eat,
"Children," said the Teacher,
"The life is more than meat.

"Consider the lilies
How beautiful they grow!
Never King has such glory,
Yet no toil they know."
Oh, happy were the lilies
That He loved them so.

EMILY A. BRADDOCK.

SEA WEED

When descends on the Atlantic
The gigantic
Storm-wind of the equinox,
Landward in his wrath he scourges
The toiling surges,
Laden with sea-weed from the rocks:

From Bermuda's reefs; from edges
Of sunken ledges,
In some far-off, bright Azore;
From Bahama, and the dashing,
Silver-flashing
Surges of San Salvador;

From the tumbling surf, that buries
The Orkneyan skerries,
Answering the hoarse Hebrides;
And from wrecks of ships, and drifting
Spars, uplifting
On the desolate, rainy seas;—

Ever drifting, drifting, drifting
On the shifting
Currents of the restless main;
Till in sheltered coves, and reaches
Of sandy beaches,
All have found repose again.[1]

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

THE HOUSE OF THE TREES

Ope your doors and take me in,
Spirit of the wood;
Wash me clean of dust and din,
Clothe me in your mood.

Take me from the noisy light
To the sunless peace,
Where at midday standeth Night,
Signing Toil's release.

All your dusky twilight stores
To my senses give;
Take me in and lock the doors,
Show me how to live.

Lift your leafy roof for me,
Part your yielding walls,
Let me wander lingeringly
Through your scented halls.

[1] Sea-weed torn from rocks along the course of the Gulf Stream, as indicated above, might be brought back southward by the polar current that skirts the shore of Massachusetts near the poet's summer home at Nahant.

Ope your doors and take me in,
Spirit of the wood;
Take me—make me next of kin
To your leafy brood.

ETHELWYN WETHERALD.

From "A FOREST HYMN"

The groves were God's first temples. Ere man learned
To hew the shaft, and lay the architrave,
And spread the roof above them,—ere he framed
The lofty vault, to gather and roll back
The sound of anthems; in the darkling wood,
Amidst the cool and silence, he knelt down,
And offered to the Mightiest solemn thanks
And supplication. For his simple heart
Might not resist the sacred influences
Which, from the stilly twilight of the place,
And from the gray old trunks that high in heaven
Mingled their mossy boughs, and from the sound
Of the invisible breath that swayed at once
All their green tops, stole over him, and bowed
His spirit with the thought of boundless power
And inaccessible majesty. Ah, why
Should we, in the world's riper years, neglect
God's ancient sanctuaries, and adore
Only among the crowd, and under roofs
That our frail hands have raised?

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

THE COMING OF SPRING

From *The Song of Solomon*, Chap. II.

For, lo, the winter is past,
The rain is over and gone;
The flowers appear on the earth;
The time for the singing of birds is come,
And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.

A SPRING SONG

From *Pippa Passes*

The year's at the spring
And day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hill side's dew-pearled;
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn;
God's in his heaven,
All's right with the world!

ROBERT BROWNING.

A SPRING SONG

AUTHOR UNKNOWN. SET TO MUSIC A.D. 1300

Summer is y-comen in,
Loud sing, cuckoo:
Groweth seed,

And bloweth[1] mead[2]
And springeth the wood now!
Sing cuckoo, cuckoo!

Ewe bleateth after lamb,
Loweth after calf cow
Bullock starteth,[3]
Buck verteth
Merrily sing cuckoo,
Cuckoo, cuckoo!
Well singest thou cuckoo!
Nor cease thou never now,
Sing, cuckoo, now,
Sing cuckoo, cuckoo.
Sing, cuckoo, now.

ON A MARCH MORNING

Our elm is heavy with ice,
The mountain is hid in a mist,
And the heaven is grey
Above, and away,
Where the vapours the hill-tops have kissed.

The fields are bleak patches of white,
Our stream is still shut in his prison
Of ice and of snow,
And the sun, half-aglow,
Scarce over the forest is risen.

[1] **Bloweth**—Blossometh.
[2] **Mead**—Meadow.
[3] **Starteth**—Leapeth.

But there is something abroad in the air,
Perchance 'tis the spirit of spring,
That fills me with fancies
Of blue skies and pansies,
And songs that the meadow brooks sing.

Some spirit the season has sent,
With visions of blossom and leaf,
And song—as a token,
Of feeling unspoken,
In this time of the aged winter's grief.

WILLIAM WILFRED CAMPBELL.

TO MY SISTER

It is the first mild day of March:
Each minute sweeter than before,
The redbreast sings from the tall larch[1]
That stands beside our door.

There is a blessing in the air,
Which seems a sense of joy to yield
To the bare trees, and mountains bare,
And grass in the green field.

My Sister! ('tis a wish of mine)
Now that our morning meal is done,
Make haste, your morning task resign;
Come forth and feel the sun.

Edward will come with you;—and, pray,
Put on with speed your woodland dress;

[1] **Larch**—Tamarack.

And bring no book: for this one day
We'll give to idleness.

No joyless forms shall regulate
Our living calendar[1]:
We from to-day, my Friend, will date
The opening of the year.

Love, now a universal birth,[2]
From heart to heart is stealing,
From earth to man, from man to earth:
—It is the hour of feeling.

One moment now may give us more
Than years of toiling reason:
Our minds shall drink at every pore
The spirit of the season.

Some silent laws our hearts will make,
Which they shall long obey:
We for the year to come may take
Our temper from to-day.

And from the blessed power that rolls
About, below, above,
We'll frame the measure of our souls:
They shall be tuned to love.

Then come, my Sister! come, I pray,
With speed put on your woodland dress;
—And bring no book: for this one day
We'll give to idleness.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

1 We shall determine the seasons by the condition of living things, as birds and flowers, not by an almanac.

2 Every one feels kindly now.

IN APRIL

When Spring unbound comes o'er us like a flood,
My spirit slips its bars,
And thrills to see the trees break into bud
As skies break into stars;

And joys that earth is green with eager grass,
The heavens gray with rain,
And quickens when the spirit breezes pass,
And turn and pass again;

And dreams upon frog melodies at night,
Bird ecstasies at dawn,
And wakes to find sweet April at her height
And May still beck'ning on;

And feels its sordid work, its empty play,
Its failures and its stains
Dissolved in blossom dew, and washed away
In delicate spring rains.

ETHELWYN WETHERALD.

APRIL

The grey song-sparrows full of spring have sung
Their clear thin silvery tunes in leafless trees;
The robin hops, and whistles, and among
The silver-tasselled poplars the brown bees
Murmur faint dreams of summer harvestries;
The creamy sun at even scatters down
A gold-green mist across the murmuring town.

By the slow streams the frogs all day and night
Dream without thought of pain or heed of ill,
Watching the long warm silent hours take flight,
And ever with soft throats that pulse and thrill,
From the pale-weeded shallows trill and trill,
Tremulous sweet voices, flute-like, answering
One to another, glorying in the spring.

All day across the ever-cloven soil,
Strong horses labour, steaming in the sun,
Down the long furrows with slow straining toil,
Turning the brown clean layers; and one by one
The crows gloom over them till daylight done
Finds them asleep somewhere in dusked lines
Beyond the wheatlands in the northern pines.

The old year's cloaking of brown leaves, that bind
The forest floor-ways, plated close and true—
The last love's labour of the autumn wind—
Is broken with curled flower buds white and blue
In all the matted hollows, and speared through
With thousand serpent-spotted blades up-sprung,
Yet bloomless, of the slender adder-tongue.

In the warm noon the south wind creeps and cools,
Where the red-budded stems of maples throw
Still tangled etchings on the amber pools,
Quite silent now, forgetful of the slow
Drip of the taps, the troughs,[1] and trampled snow,
The keen March mornings, and the silvering rime
And mirthful labour of the sugar prime.[2]

[1] **Troughs** hewn out of the split half of a short log were formerly used to catch the sap dropping from the "spiles" or taps.

[2] The sugar season at its best.

Ah, I have wandered with unwearied feet,
All the long sweetness of an April day,
Lulled with cool murmurs and the drowsy beat
Of partridge wings in secret thickets grey,
The marriage hymns of all the birds at play,
The faces of sweet flowers, and easeful dreams
Beside slow reaches of frog-haunted streams;

Wandered with happy feet, and quite forgot
The shallow toil, the strife against the grain,
Near souls, that hear us call, but answer not,
The loneliness, perplexity and pain,
And high thoughts cankered with an earthly stain.
And then the long draught emptied to the lees,
I turn me homeward in slow pacing ease,

Cleaving the cedar shadows and the thin
Mist of grey gnats that cloud the river shore,
Sweet even choruses, that dance and spin
Soft tangles in the sunset; and once more
The city smites me with its dissonant roar.
To its hot heart I pass, untroubled yet,
Fed with calm hope, without desire or fret.

* * * * * * * *

ARCHIBALD LAMPMAN.

THE POET'S SPRING CALENDAR

From *May-Day*

Ah! well I mind the calendar,
Faithful through a thousand years,

Of the painted race of flowers,
Exact to days, exact to hours.
I know the trusty almanac
Of the punctual coming-back,
On their due days, of the birds.
I marked them yestermorn,
A flock of finches[1] darting
Beneath the crystal arch,[2]
Piping, as they flew, a march,—
Belike the one they used in parting
Last year from yon oak or larch;
Dusky sparrows in a crowd,
Diving, darting northward free,
Suddenly betook them all,
Every one to his hole in the wall,
Or to his niche in the apple-tree.
I greet with joy the choral trains
Fresh from palms and Cuba's canes.
Best gems of Nature's cabinet,
With dews of tropic morning wet.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

SOUNDS OF SPRING

From *May-Day*

There is no bard in all the choir—
Nor Homer's self, the poet sire,
Wise Milton's odes of pensive pleasure,
Or Shakespeare whom no mind can measure,

1 **Finches**—Commonly called "yellow birds."
2 **Crystal arch**—The clear dome of the sky on a fine day.

Nor Collins' verse of tender pain,
Nor Byron's clarion of disdain,
Scott, the delight of generous boys,
Or Wordsworth, Pan's[1] recording voice,—
Not one of all can put in verse,
Or to this presence could rehearse,
The sights and voices ravishing
The boy knew on the hills in spring,
When pacing through the oaks he heard
Sharp queries of the sentry-bird,
The heavy grouse's sudden whirr,
The rattle of the kingfisher;
Or marked, benighted and forlorn,
The first far signal-fire of morn.
These syllables that Nature spoke,
And the thoughts that in him woke,
Can adequately utter none
Save to his ear the wind-harp lone.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

JUNE

From *The Vision of Sir Launfal*

And what is so rare as a day in June?
Then, if ever, come perfect days;
Then Heaven tries the earth if it be in tune,
And over it softly her warm ear lays:
Whether we look, or whether we listen,
We hear life murmur, or see it glisten;

[1] **Pan**—The god of shepherds and patron of fishing and hunting.

Every clod feels a stir of might,
An instinct within it that reaches and towers,
And, groping blindly above it for light,
Climbs to a soul in grass and flowers;
The flush of life may well be seen
Thrilling back over hills and valleys;
The cowslip startles[1] in meadows green,
The buttercup catches the sun in its chalice,
And there's never a leaf or a blade too mean
To be some happy creature's palace;
The little bird sits at his door in the sun,
Atilt like a blossom among the leaves,
And lets his illumined being o'errun
With the deluge of summer it receives;
His mate feels the eggs beneath her wings,
And the heart in her dumb breast flutters and sings;
He sings to the wide world, and she to her nest,—
In the nice ear of Nature which song is the best?

Now is the high-tide of the year,
And whatever of life hath ebbed away
Comes flooding back with a ripply cheer,
Into every bare inlet and creek and bay;
Now the heart is so full that a drop overfills it,
We are happy now because God wills it;
No matter how barren the past may have been,
'Tis enough for us now that the leaves are green;
We sit in the warm shade and feel right well
How the sap creeps up and the blossoms swell;
We may shut our eyes, but we cannot help knowing
That skies are clear and grass is growing;
The breeze comes whispering in our ear,
That dandelions are blossoming near,

1 Startles—Starts.

That maize has sprouted, that streams are flowing,
That the river is bluer than the sky,
That the robin is plastering his house hard by;
And if the breeze kept the good news back,
For other couriers we should not lack;
We could guess it all by yon heifer's lowing,—
And hark! how clear bold chanticleer
Warmed with the new wine of the year,
Tells all in his lusty crowing!

Joy comes, grief goes, we know not how;
Everything is happy now,
Everything is upward striving;
'Tis as easy now for the heart to be true
As for grass to be green or skies to be blue,—
'Tis the natural way of living:
Who knows whither the clouds have fled?
In the unscarred heaven they leave no wake;
And the eyes forget the tears they have shed,
The heart forgets its sorrow and ache.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

HEAT

From plains that reel to southward, dim,
The road runs by me white and bare;
Up the steep hill it seems to swim
Beyond, and melt into the glare.
Upward half-way, or it may be
Nearer the summit, slowly steals
A hay-cart, moving dustily
With idly clacking wheels.

By his cart's side the wagoner
  Is slouching slowly at his ease,
Half-hidden in the windless blur
  Of white dust puffing to his knees.
This wagon on the height above,
  From sky to sky on either hand,
Is the sole thing that seems to move
  In all the heat-held land.

Beyond me in the fields the sun
  Soaks in the grass and hath his will;
I count the marguerites one by one;
  Even the buttercups are still.
On the brook yonder not a breath
  Disturbs the spider or the midge.
The water-bugs draw close beneath
  The cool gloom of the bridge.

Where the far elm-tree shadows flood
  Dark patches in the burning grass,
The cows, each with her peaceful cud,
  Lie waiting for the heat to pass.
From somewhere on the slope near by
  Into the pale depth of the noon
A wandering thrush slides leisurely
  His thin revolving tune.

In intervals of dreams I hear
  The cricket from the droughty ground;
The grasshoppers spin into mine ear
  A small innumerable sound.
I lift mine eyes sometimes to gaze:
  The burning sky-line blinds my sight:

The woods far off are blue with haze:
The hills are drenched in light.

And yet to me not this or that
Is always sharp or always sweet;
In the sloped shadow of my hat
I lean at rest and drain the heat;
Nay more, I think some blessèd power
Hath brought me wandering idly here:
In the full furnace of this hour
My thoughts grow keen and clear.

ARCHIBALD LAMPMAN.

THE DROUTH [1]

A PETITION

Hath Heaven's blessing passed away?
The sky's sweet smile quite gone?
There is no sacred rain by day,
No beaded dew at dawn.
How can Thy helpless creatures live
When drouth destroys the sod?
Upon our knees we pray Thee give
Thy creatures food, O God!

The little stream hath ceased to run,
The clover-bloom is dead,
The meadows redden in the sun,

[1] This poem appeared in a Toronto newspaper on August 31, 1899, the end of the driest summer recorded during sixty years. It is a curious circumstance that early on the following morning one and a half inches of rain fell, almost as much as during the three preceding months taken together.

The very weeds are fled.
Their heads the mournful cattle shake
Beside the thirsting wood.
Lord, hear the humble prayer we make,
To give Thy creatures food.

The panting sheep gasp in the shade,
Their matted wool is wet,
And where the cruel share[1] is laid
The striving horses sweat,
They welcome death—'tis pain to live—
Restore Thy blessed sod;
Oh, hear our humble prayer and give
Thy creatures food, O God!

R. K. KERNIGHAN (THE KHAN).

A CALM IN THE TROPICS

From *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
'Twas sad as sad could be;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea!

All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody Sun, at noon,

[1] The ground was very hard to plough.

Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the Moon.

Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

Water, water, everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink.

The very deep did rot: O Christ!
That ever this should be!
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

SIGNS OF RAIN

FORTY REASONS FOR NOT ACCEPTING AN INVITATION OF A FRIEND TO MAKE AN EXCURSION WITH HIM

1. The hollow winds begin to blow;
2. The clouds look black, the glass[1] is low,
3. The soot falls down, the spaniels sleep,
4. And spiders from their cobwebs peep.
5. Last night the sun went pale to bed,
6. The moon in halos hid her head;
7. The boding shepherd heaves a sigh,
8. For see, a rainbow spans the sky!
9. The walls are damp, the ditches smell,
10. Closed is the pink-eyed pimpernel.

[1] Glass—Mercury in the barometer.

11. Hark how the chairs and tables crack!
12. Old Betty's nerves[1] are on the rack;
13. Loud quacks the duck, the peacocks cry,
14. The distant hills are seeming nigh.
15. How restless are the snorting swine!
16. The busy flies disturb the kine,
17. Low o'er the grass the swallow wings,
18. The cricket, too, how sharp he sings!
19. Puss on the hearth, with velvet paws,
20. Sits wiping o'er her whiskered jaws;
21. Through the clear streams the fishes rise,
22. And nimbly catch the incautious flies.
23. The glow-worms, numerous and light,
24. Illumed the dewy dell last night;
25. At dusk the squalid toad was seen,
26. Hopping and crawling o'er the green;
27. The whirling dust the wind obeys,
28. And in the rapid eddy plays;
29. The frog has changed his yellow vest,
30. And in a russet coat is dressed.
31. Though June, the air is cold and still,
32. The mellow blackbird's[2] voice is shrill;
33. My dog, so altered in his taste,
34. Quits mutton-bones on grass to feast;
35. And see yon rooks, how odd their flight!
36. They imitate the gliding kite,
37. And seem precipitate to fall,
38. As if they felt the piercing ball.
39. 'Twill surely rain; I see with sorrow,
40. Our jaunt must be put off to-morrow.

EDWARD JENNER.

[1] An onset of rheumatic pains is considered to indicate a coming storm.

[2] The note of the English blackbird is more musical than that of ours.

SUMMER STORM

Untremulous in the river clear,
Toward the sky's image, hangs the imaged bridge;
So still the air that I can hear
The slender clarion of the unseen midge;
Out of the stillness, with a gathering creep,
Like rising wind in leaves, which now decreases,
Now lulls, now swells, and all the while increases,
The huddling trample of a drove of sheep
Tilts the loose planks, and then as gradually ceases
In dust on the other side; life's emblem deep,
A confused noise between two silences,
Finding at last in dust precarious peace.
On the wide marsh the purple-blossomed grasses
Soak up the sunshine; sleeps the brimming tide,
Save when the wedge-shaped wake in silence passes
Of some slow water-rat, whose sinuous glide
Wavers the long green sedge's shade from side to side;
But up the west, like a rock-shivered surge,
Climbs a great cloud edged with sun-whitened spray;
Huge whirls of foam boil toppling o'er its verge,
And falling still it seems, and yet it climbs alway.

Suddenly all the sky is hid
As with the shutting of a lid,
One by one great drops are falling
Doubtful and slow;
Down the pane they are crookedly crawling,
And the wind breathes low;
Slowly the circles widen on the river,
Widen and mingle, one and all;

Here and there the slenderer flowers shiver,
  Struck by an icy rain-drop's fall.

Now on the hills I hear the thunder mutter,
  The wind is gathering in the west;
The upturned leaves first whiten and flutter,
  Then droop to a fitful rest;
Up from the stream with sluggish flap
  Struggles the gull and floats away;
Nearer and nearer rolls the thunder-clap—
  We shall not see the sun go down to-day:
Now leaps the wind on the sleepy marsh,
  And tramples the grass with terrified feet,
The startled river turns leaden and harsh.
  You can hear the quick heart of the tempest beat.

  Look! Look! that livid flash!
And instantly follows the rattling thunder,
As if some cloud crag, split asunder,
  Fell, splintering with a ruinous crash,
On the Earth, which crouches in silence under;
  And now a solid gray wall of rain
Shuts off the landscape, mile by mile;
  For a breath's space I see the blue wood again,
And, ere the next heart-beat, the wind-hurled pile,
  That seemed but now a league aloof,
  Bursts crackling o'er the sun-parched roof;
Against the windows the storm comes dashing,
Through the tattered foliage the hail tears crashing,
  The blue lightning flashes,
  The rapid hail clashes,
The white waves are tumbling,
  And, in one baffled roar,

Like the toothless sea mumbling
A rock-bristled shore,
The thunder is rumbling
And crashing and crumbling,—
Will silence return nevermore?

Hush! Still as death,
The tempest holds his breath
As from a sudden will;
The rain stops short, but from the eaves
You see it drop, and hear it from the leaves,
All is so bodingly still;
Again, now, now, again
Plashes the rain in heavy gouts,
The crinkled lightning
Seems ever brightening,
And loud and long
Again the thunder shouts
His battle-song,—
One quivering flash,
One wildering crash,
Followed by silence dead and dull,
As if the cloud, let go,
Leapt bodily below
To whelm the earth in one mad overthrow,
And then a total lull.

Gone, gone, so soon!
No more my half-crazed fancy there
Can shape a giant in the air,
No more I see his streaming hair,
The writhing portent of his form;—
The pale and quiet moon

Makes her calm forehead bare,
And the last fragments of the storm,
Like shattered rigging from a fight at sea,
Silent and few, are drifting over me.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

TO AUTUMN

I

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run;
To bend with apples the mossed cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For Summer has o'er-brimmed their clammy cells.

II

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reaped furrow sound asleep,
Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook[1]

1 **Hook**—Sickle.

Spares the next swath and all its twinèd flowers :
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cider-press, with a patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozings, hours by hours.

III

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—
While barrèd clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river sallows,[1] borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn[2];
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
The red-breast whistles from garden-croft[3];
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

JOHN KEATS.

SEPTEMBER, 1819

The sylvan slopes with corn-clad fields
Are hung, as if with golden shields,
Bright trophies of the sun!
Like a fair sister of the sky,
Unruffled doth the blue lake lie,
The mountains looking on.

And sooth to say, yon vocal grove,
Albeit uninspired by love,

1 Sallows—Willows.

2 Hilly bourn—Hills on the horizon forming the boundary of vision.

3 Croft—A small enclosed field adjoining a house.

By love untaught to ring,[1]
May well afford to mortal ear
An impulse more profoundly dear
Than music of the Spring.

For *that* from turbulence and heat
Proceeds, from some uneasy seat
In nature's struggling frame,
Some region of impatient life;
And jealousy, and quivering strife,
Therein a portion claim.

This, this is holy;—while I hear
These vespers of another year,
This hymn of thanks and praise,
My spirit seems to mount above
The anxieties of human love,
And earth's precarious days.

But list!—though winter storms be nigh,
Unchecked is that soft harmony:
There lives Who can provide
For all His creatures; and in Him,
Even like the radiant Seraphim,
These choristers confide.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

SEPTEMBER

Thus without grief the golden days go by,
So soft we scarcely notice how they wend;
And like a smile half-happy, or a sigh,
The summer passes to her quiet end.

ARCHIBALD LAMPMAN.

[1] The infrequent autumn songs of birds are not due to affection for mates, as the songs of spring are considered to be.

OCTOBER

O suns and skies and clouds of June,
And flowers of June together,
Ye cannot rival for one hour
October's bright blue weather.

When loud the bumble-bee makes haste,
Belated, thriftless vagrant,
And golden-rod is dying fast
And lanes with grapes are fragrant.

When gentians roll their fringes tight,
To save them for the morning,
And chestnuts fall from satin burrs
Without a sound of warning.

When on the ground red apples lie,
In piles like jewels shining,
And redder still on old stone walls
Are leaves of woodbine twining.

When all the lovely wayside things
Their white-winged seeds are sowing,
And in the fields still green and fair,
Late aftermaths are growing.

When springs run low and on the brook,
In idle golden freighting,
Bright leaves sift noiseless in the hush
Of woods, for winter waiting.

When comrades seek sweet country haunts,
By twos and twos together,

And count like misers, hour by hour,
October's bright blue weather.

O suns and skies and flowers of June,
Count all your boasts together,
Love loveth best of all the year
October's bright blue weather.

HELEN HUNT JACKSON.

FALL AND SPRING

From the time the wind wakes
To the time of snowflakes,
That's the time the heart aches
Every cloudy day;
That's the time the heart takes
Thought of all its heart-breaks,
That's the time the heart makes
Life a cloudy way.

From the time the grass creeps
To the time the wind sleeps,
That's the time the heart leaps
To the golden ray;
That's the time that joy sweeps
Through the depths of heart-deeps,
That's the time the heart keeps
Happy holiday.

ETHELWYN WETHERALD.

THE DEATH OF THE FLOWERS

The melancholy days are come, the saddest of the year,
Of wailing winds, and naked woods, and meadows brown and sear,

Heaped in the hollows of the grove, the autumn leaves lie dead;
They rustle to the eddying gust, and to the rabbit's tread.
The robin and the wren are flown, and from the shrub the jay,
And from the wood-top calls the crow through all the gloomy day.

Where are the flowers, the fair young flowers, that lately sprang and stood
In brighter light and softer airs, a beauteous sisterhood?
Alas! they all are in their graves; the gentle race of flowers
Are lying in their lowly beds with the fair and good of ours.
The rain is falling where they lie; but the cold November rain
Calls not from out the gloomy earth the lovely ones again.

The wind-flower and the violet, they perished long ago,
And the brier-rose and the orchis died amid the summer glow;
But on the hill the golden-rod, and the aster in the wood,
And the yellow sunflower by the brook in autumn beauty stood,
Till fell the frost from the clear cold heaven, as falls the plague on men,
And the brightness of their smile was gone from upland, glade, and glen.

And now, when comes the calm, mild day, as still such days will come,
To call the squirrel and the bee from out their winter home;
When the sound of dropping nuts is heard, though all the trees are still,
And twinkle in the smoky light the waters of the rill;
The south-wind searches for the flowers whose fragrance late he bore,
And sighs to find them in the wood and by the stream no more.

And then I think of one who in her youthful beauty died,
The fair meek blossom that grew up and faded by my side.
In the cold moist earth we laid her, when the forests cast the leaf,
And we wept that one so lovely should have a life so brief;
Yet not unmeet it was that one, like that young friend of ours,
So gentle and so beautiful, should perish with the flowers.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

INDIAN SUMMER

Along the line of smoky hills
The crimson forest stands,
And all the day the blue-jay calls
Throughout the autumn lands.

Now by the brook the maple leans
With all his glory spread,
And all the sumachs on the hills
Have turned their green to red.

Now by great marshes wrapt in mist,
Or past some river's mouth,
Throughout the long, still autumn day
Wild birds are flying south.

WILLIAM WILFRED CAMPBELL.

INDIAN SUMMER

From *Evangeline*

Such was the advent of autumn. Then followed that beautiful season,
Called by the pious Acadian peasants the Summer of All-Saints! [1]
Filled was the air with a dreamy and magical light; and the landscape
Lay as if new-created in all the freshness of childhood.
Peace seemed to reign upon earth, and the restless heart of the ocean
Was for a moment consoled. All sounds were in harmony blended.
Voices of children at play, the crowing of cocks in the farm-yards,
Whir of wings in the drowsy air, and the cooing of pigeons,

[1] Because generally occurring early in November, the first of November being All-Saints' Day.

All were subdued and low as the murmurs of love,
and the great sun
Looked with the eye of love through the golden
vapours around him;
While arrayed in its robes of russet and scarlet and
yellow,
Bright with the sheen of the dew, each glittering
tree of the forest
Flashed like the plane-tree the Persian adorned
with mantles and jewels.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

INDIAN SUMMER

By the purple haze that lies
On the distant rocky height,
By the deep blue of the skies,
By the smoky amber light
Through the forest arches streaming
Where Nature on her throne sits dreaming.
And the sun is scarcely gleaming
Through the cloudlets, snowy-white,—
Winter's lovely herald greets us
Ere the ice-crowned tyrant meets us!

This dreamy Indian summer day
Attunes the soul to tender sadness;
We love—but joy not in the ray;
It is not summer's fervid gladness,
But a melancholy glory
Hovering softly round decay,—
Like swan that sings her own sad story
Ere she floats in death away.

SUSANNA STRICKLAND MOODIE.

INDIAN SUMMER

From *An Indian Summer Reverie*

The cock's shrill trump that tells of scattered corn,
Passed breezily on by all his flapping mates,
Faint and more faint, from barn to barn is borne,
Southward, perhaps to far Magellan's Straits;
Dimly I catch the throb of distant flails;
Silently overhead the hen-hawk sails,
With watchful, measuring eye, and for his quarry waits.

The sobered robin, hunger-silent now,
Seeks cedar-berries blue,[1] his autumn cheer;
The squirrel on the shingly shagbark's[2] bough,
Now saws, now lists with downward eye and ear,
Then drops his nut, and, with a chipping bound,
Whisks to his winding fastness underground;
The clouds like swans drift down the streaming atmosphere.

O'er yon bare knoll the pointed cedar shadows
Drowse on the crisp, gray moss; the ploughman's call
Creeps faint as smoke from black, fresh-furrowed meadows;
The single crow a single caw lets fall;
And all around me every bush and tree
Says Autumn 's here, and Winter soon will be,
Who snows his soft, white sleep and silence over all.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

1 The red cedar has blue berries maturing late in the fall.

2 The bark of the shagbark hickory often hangs half-detached from the trunk in thin flat pieces.

SNOW-FLAKES

Out of the bósom of the Air,
Out of the cloud-fólds of her gárments shaken,
Over the woódlands brown and báre,
Over the hárvest-fields forsáken,
Silent and soft and slow
Descends the snow.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

THE SNOW-STORM

Announced by all the trumpets of the sky,
Arrives the snow; and, driving o'er the fields,
Seems nowhere to alight; the whited air
Hides hills and woods, the river, and the heaven,
And veils the farm-house at the garden's end.
The sled and traveller stopped, the courier's[1] feet
Delayed, all friends shut out, the housemates sit
Around the radiant fireplace, enclosed
In a tumultuous privacy of storm.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

SNOW

Down out of heaven,
Frost-kissed
And wind driven,
Flake upon flake,
Over forest and lake,
Cometh the snow.

Folding the forest,
Folding the farms,

[1] **Courier**—The mail-carrier.

In a mantle of white;
  And the river's great arms,
Kissed by the chill night
  From clamour to rest,
Lie all white and shrouded
  Upon the world's breast.

Falling so slowly
  Down from above,
So white, hushed, and holy,
  Folding the city
Like the great pity
  Of God in His love;
Sent down out of heaven
  On its sorrow and crime,
Blotting them, folding them
  Under its rime.

Fluttering, rustling,
  Soft as a breath,
The whisper of leaves,
  The low pinions of death,
Or the voice of the dawning,
  When day has its birth,
Is the music of silence
  It makes to the earth.

Thus down out of heaven,
  Frost-kissed
And wind-driven,
  Flake upon flake,
Over forest and lake,
  Cometh the snow.

WILLIAM WILFRED CAMPBELL.

WINTER MORNING ON THE FARM

From *The Task*

Forth goes the woodman, leaving unconcern'd
The cheerful haunts of man, to wield the axe
And drive the wedge in yonder forest drear,
From morn to eve his solitary task.
Shaggy, and lean, and shrewd, with pointed ears
And tail cropp'd short, half lurcher [1] and half cur,
His dog attends him. Close behind his heel
Now creeps he slow; and now with many a frisk
Wide scampering, snatches up the drifted snow
With ivory teeth, or ploughs it with his snout;
Then shakes his powder'd coat, and barks for joy.
Heedless of all his pranks, the sturdy churl [2]
Moves right toward the mark; nor stops for aught.

* * * * * * * * *

Now from the roost, or from the neighbouring pale
Where, diligent to catch the first faint gleam
Of smiling day, they gossip'd side by side,
Come trooping at the housewife's well-known call
The feather'd tribes domestic. Half on wing,
And half on foot, they brush the fleecy flood,
Conscious, and fearful of too deep a plunge.
The sparrows peep, and quit the sheltering eaves
To seize the fair occasion. Well they eye
The scatter'd grain, and thievishly resolved
To escape the impending famine, often scared
As oft return, a pert voracious kind.
Clean riddance quickly made, one only care

[1] **Lurcher**—A silent hunting dog used by poachers.

[2] **Churl**—Used without contempt with the ancient meaning of countryman.

Remains to each, the search of sunny nook,
Or shed impervious to the blast. Resign'd
To sad necessity, the cock foregoes
His wonted strut, and wading at their head
With well-consider'd steps, seems to resent
His alter'd gait and stateliness retrench'd.

WILLIAM COWPER.

THE CLOSING YEAR

'Tis midnight's holy hour,—and silence now
Is brooding like a gentle spirit o'er
The still and pulseless world. Hark! on the winds
The bell's deep tones are swelling,—'tis the knell
Of the departed year. No funeral train
Is sweeping past; yet, on the stream and wood,
With melancholy light, the moonbeams rest
Like a pale, spotless shroud; the air is stirred
As by a mourner's sigh; and on yon cloud
That floats so still and placidly through heaven,
The spirits of the seasons seem to stand,—
Young Spring, bright Summer, Autumn's solemn form,
And Winter with its aged locks,—and breathe,
In mournful cadences that come abroad
Like the far wind-harp's wild and touching wail,
A melancholy dirge o'er the dead year,
Gone from the earth forever.

'Tis a time
For memory and for tears. Within the deep,
Still chambers of the heart, a spectre dim,

Whose tones are like the wizard's voice of Time
Heard from the tomb of ages, points its cold
And solemn finger to the beautiful
And holy visions that have passed away,
And left no shadow of their loveliness
On the dead waste of life. That spectre lifts
The coffin-lid of Hope and Joy and Love,
And bending mournfully above the pale,
Sweet forms that slumber there, scatters dead flowers
O'er what has passed to nothingness.

The year
Has gone, and with it many a glorious throng
Of happy dreams. Its mark is on each brow,
Its shadow in each heart. In its swift course
It waved its sceptre o'er the beautiful,
And they are not. It laid its pallid hand
Upon the strong man, and the haughty form
Is fallen, and the flashing eye is dim.
It trod the hall of revelry, where thronged
The bright and joyous, and the tearful wail
Of stricken ones is heard where erst the song
And reckless shout resounded.

It passed o'er
The battle-plain where sword and spear and shield
Flashed in the light of midday, and the strength
Of serried hosts is shivered, and the grass,
Green from the soil of carnage, waves above
The crushed and mouldering skeleton. It came,
And faded like a wreath of mist at eve;
Yet ere it melted in the viewless air
It heralded its millions to their home
In the dim land of dreams.

Remorseless Time!
Fierce spirit of the glass and scythe!—what power
Can stay him in his silent course, or melt
His iron heart to pity? On, still on,
He presses, and forever. The proud bird,
The condor of the Andes, that can soar
Through heaven's unfathomable depths, or brave
The fury of the northern hurricane,
And bathe his plumage in the thunder's home,
Furls his broad wings at nightfall, and sinks down
To rest upon his mountain crag,—but Time
Knows not the weight of sleep or weariness,
And night's deep darkness has no chain to bind
His rushing pinions.

Revolutions sweep
O'er earth, like troubled visions o'er the breast
Of dreaming sorrow; cities rise and sink
Like bubbles on the water; fiery isles
Spring blazing from the ocean, and go back
To their mysterious caverns; mountains rear
To heaven their bald and blackened cliffs, and bow
Their tall heads to the plain; new empires rise,
Gathering the strength of hoary centuries,
And rush down like the Alpine avalanche,
Startling the nations; and the very stars,
Yon bright and burning blazonry of God,
Glitter awhile in their eternal depths,
And, like the Pleiads, loveliest of their train,
Shoot from their glorious spheres, and pass away
To darkle in the trackless void,—yet Time,
Time the tomb-builder, holds his fierce career,
Dark, stern, all-pitiless, and pauses not
Amid the mighty wrecks that strew his path

To sit and muse, like other conquerors,
Upon the fearful ruin he has wrought.

GEORGE DENISON PRENTICE.

MUSIC BY MOONLIGHT

From *The Merchant of Venice*

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!
Here will we sit and let the sounds of music
Creep in our ears: soft stillness and the night
Become the touches of sweet harmony.
Sit Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold:
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings,[1]
Still[2] quiring to the young-eyed cherubins;
Such harmony is in immortal souls;
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close us in, we cannot hear it.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

NIGHT

The night has a thousand eyes,
The day but one;
Yet the light of the bright world dies
With the dying sun.

The mind has a thousand eyes,
And the heart but one;
Yet the light of a whole life dies
When its love is done.

FRANCIS W. BOURDILLON.

1 It was believed by some philosophers that the heavenly bodies made harmonious music as they moved along in their orbits.

2 **Still**—Continually, forever.

NIGHT

Night is the time for rest:
  How sweet, when labours close,
To gather round an aching breast
  The curtain of repose,
Stretch tired limbs, and lay the head
Upon our own delightful bed!

Night is the time for dreams:
  The gay romance of life,
When truth that is, and truth that seems,
  Blend in fantastic strife;
Ah! visions, less beguiling far
Than waking dreams by daylight are!

Night is the time for toil:
  To plough the classic field,
Intent to find the buried spoil
  Its wealthy furrows yield;
Till all is ours that sages taught,
That poets sang or heroes wrought.

Night is the time to weep:
  To wet with unseen tears
Those graves of Memory, where sleep
  The joys of other years;
Hopes, that were Angels at their birth,
But perished young, like things of earth.

Night is the time to watch:
  O'er ocean's dark expanse,
To hail the Pleiades, or catch

The full moon's earliest glance,
That brings into the homesick mind
All we have loved and left behind.

Night is the time for care:
Brooding on hours misspent,
To see the spectre of Despair
Come to our lonely tent;
Like Brutus, midst his slumbering host,
Startled by Cæsar's stalwart ghost.[1]

Night is the time to muse:
When, from the eye, the soul
Takes flight; and, with expanding views,
Beyond the starry pole
Descries athwart the abyss of night
The dawn of uncreated light.

Night is the time to pray:
Our Saviour oft withdrew
To desert mountains far away;
So will his followers do,—
Steal from the throng to haunts untrod,
And hold communion there with God.

Night is the time for Death:
When all around is peace,
Calmly to yield the weary breath,
From sin and suffering cease,
Think of heaven's bliss, and give the sign
To parting friends;—such death be mine!

JAMES MONTGOMERY.

1 See Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar*, Act IV, Scene 3.

THE LIFE WITH NATURE

From *As You Like It*

Now, my co-mates and brothers in exile,
Hath not old custom made this life more sweet
Than that of painted pomp? Are not these woods
More free from peril than the envious court?
Here feel we but the penalty of Adam,
The seasons' difference, as the icy fang
And churlish chiding of the winter's wind,
Which, when it bites and blows upon my body,
Even till I shrink with cold, I smile and say,
"This is no flattery: these are counsellors
That feelingly persuade me what I am."
Sweet are the uses of adversity,
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,[1]
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head;
And thus our life exempt from public haunt
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones and good in everything.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

COMMUNION WITH NATURE

From *Thanatopsis*

To him who, in the love of Nature, holds
Communion with her visible forms, she speaks
A various language: for his gayer hours
She has a voice of gladness, and a smile

[1] **Venomous**—An old superstition.

And eloquence of beauty; and she glides
Into his darker musings with a mild
And healing sympathy, that steals away
Their sharpness, ere he is aware.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

LIFE REMOTE FROM CITIES

From *The Task*

God made the country, and man made the town.
Oh, for a lodge in some vast wilderness,
Some boundless contiguity of shade,
Where rumour of oppression and deceit,
Of unsuccessful and successful war,
Might never reach me more! My ear is pained,
My soul is sick with every day's report
Of wrong and outrage with which earth is filled.

WILLIAM COWPER.

RETIREMENT

Hackney'd in business, wearied at that oar,
Which thousands, once fast chain'd to, quit no more,
But which, when life at ebb runs weak and low,
All wish or seem to wish, they could forego;
The statesman, lawyer, merchant, man of trade,
Pants for the refuge of some rural shade,
Where, all his long anxieties forgot,
Amid the charms of a sequester'd spot,
Or recollected only to gild o'er

And add a smile to what was sweet before,
He may possess the joys he thinks he sees,
Lay his old age upon the lap of ease,
Improve the remnant of his wasted span,
And, having lived a trifler, die a man.
Thus conscience pleads her cause within the breast,
Though long rebelled against, not yet suppress'd,
And calls a creature form'd for God alone,
For Heaven's high purposes and not his own,
Calls him away from selfish ends and aims,
From what debilitates and what inflames,
From cities humming with the restless crowd,
Sordid as active, ignorant as loud,
Whose highest praise is that they live in vain,
The dupes of pleasure, or the slaves of gain,
Where works of man are cluster'd close around
And works of God are hardly to be found,
To regions where in spite of sin and woe,
Traces of Eden are still seen below,
Where mountain, river, forest, field, and grove
Remind him of his Maker's power and love.

WILLIAM COWPER.

THE APOLOGY

Think me not unkind and rude,
That I walk alone in grove and glen;
I go to the god of the wood,
To fetch his word to men.

Tax not my sloth that I
Fold my arms beside the brook;

Each cloud that floated in the sky,
Writes a letter in my book.

Chide me not, laborious band,
For the idle flowers I brought;
Every aster in my hand
Goes home loaded with a thought.

There was never mystery
But 'tis figured in the flowers;
Was never secret history
But birds tell it in the bowers.

One harvest from thy field
Homeward brought the oxen strong;
A second crop thine acres yield,
Which I gather in a song.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

THE OMNIPRESENCE OF BEAUTY

From *Wood-Notes*

Thou canst not wave thy staff in air,
Or dip thy paddle in the lake,
But it carves the bow of beauty[1] there,
And the ripples in rhymes[2] the oar forsake.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

1 A curved line is considered more beautiful than a straight one

2 The succession of similar wavelets is compared to the succession of similar sounds that constitutes a rhyme.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE BEAUTY OF NATURE

From *Endymion*, Book I

A thing of beauty is a joy forever:
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.
Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing
A flowery band to bind us to the earth,[1]
Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways
Made for our searching: yes, in spite of all,
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,
Trees old and young, sprouting a shady boon
For simple sheep; and such are daffodils
With the green world they live in; and clear rills
That for themselves a cooling covert make
'Gainst the hot season; the mid-forest brake,
Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose blooms.

JOHN KEATS.

SOCIETY IN NATURE

From *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,

[1] See Miss Wetherald's poem, *At Waking*, p. 120.

There is society where none intrudes
By the deep sea, and music in its roar:
I love not man the less, but nature more,
From these our interviews, in which I steal
From all I may be, or have been before,
To mingle with the universe, and feel
What I can ne'er express, yet cannot all conceal.

GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON.

SOLITUDE

From *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto II

To sit on rocks, to muse o'er flood and fell,
To slowly trace the forest's shady scene,
Where things that own not man's dominion dwell,
And mortal foot hath ne'er or rarely been;
To climb the trackless mountain all unseen,
With the wild flock that never needs a fold;
Alone o'er steeps and foaming falls to lean,—
This is not solitude; 'tis but to hold
Converse with Nature's charms, and view her stores unrolled.

But midst the crowd, the hum, the shock of men
To hear, to see, to feel, and to possess,
And roam along, the world's tired denizen,
With none who bless us, none whom we can bless;
Minions of splendour shrinking from distress!
None that, with kindred consciousness endued,
If we were not, would seem to smile the less
Of all that flattered, followed, sought, and sued;
This is to be alone; this, this is solitude!

GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON.

AN ODE[1]

The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ethereal sky,
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
Their great Original proclaim;
The unwearied sun, from day to day,
Does his Creator's power display,
And publishes to every land
The work of an Almighty hand.

Soon as the evening shades prevail,
The moon takes up the wondrous tale,
And nightly to the listening earth
Repeats the story of her birth;
While all the stars that round her burn,
And all the planets in their turn,
Confirm the tidings as they roll,
And spread the truth from pole to pole.

What though, in solemn silence, all
Move round the dark terrestrial ball?
What though no real voice or sound
Amid their radiant orbs be found?
In Reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice,
Forever singing, as they shine,
"The hand that made us is divine!"

JOSEPH ADDISON.

[1] See Psalm XIX. 1-6.

EXPOSTULATION AND REPLY

"Why, William, on that old grey stone,
Thus for the length of half a day,
Why, William, sit you thus alone,
And dream your time away?

"Where are your books?—that light bequeathed
To Beings else forlorn and blind!
Up! up! and drink the spirit breathed
From dead men to their kind.

"You look round on your Mother Earth,
As if she for no purpose bore you;
As if you were her first-born birth,
And none had lived before you!"[1]

One morning thus by Esthwaite Lake,
When life was sweet, I knew not why,
To me my good friend Matthew spake,
And thus I made reply:

"The eye—it cannot choose but see;
We cannot bid the ear be still;
Our bodies feel, where'er they be,
Against, or with our will.

"Nor less I deem that there are Powers
Which of themselves our minds impress;
That we can feed this mind of ours
In a wise passiveness.

[1] *I.e.* from whom you could acquire knowledge,

"Think you, 'mid all this mighty sum
Of things forever speaking,
That nothing of itself will come,
But we must still[1] be seeking?

"Then ask not wherefore, here, alone,
Conversing[2] as I may,
I sit upon this old grey stone,
And dream my time away."

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

THE TABLES TURNED

AN EVENING SCENE ON THE SAME SUBJECT

Up! up! my Friend, and quit your books,
Or surely you'll grow double:
Up! up! my Friend and clear your looks;
Why all this toil and trouble?

The sun, above the mountain's head,
A freshening lustre mellow,
Through all the long green fields has spread
His first sweet evening yellow.

Books! 'tis a dull and endless strife:
Come, hear the woodland linnet,
How sweet his music! on my life,
There's more of wisdom in it.

And hark! how blithe the throstle sings!
He, too, is no mean preacher:

[1] Still—Continually.

[2] Conversing—Holding communion with nature. Compare in previous stanza "things forever speaking."

Come forth into the light of things,
Let Nature be your Teacher.

She has a world of ready wealth,
Our minds and hearts to bless—
Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,
Truth breathed by cheerfulness.

One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.

Sweet is the lore which Nature brings;
Our meddling intellect
Misshapes the beauteous forms of things:—
We murder[1] to dissect.

Enough of Science and of Art;
Close up those barren leaves;
Come forth, and bring with you a heart
That watches and receives.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

THREE YEARS SHE GREW

Three years she grew in sun and shower;
Then Nature said, "A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown:
This child I to myself will take;
She shall be mine and I will make
A lady of my own.

[1] We do great injury to our tastes and finer feelings in order to gain knowledge.

"Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse; and with me
The girl, in rock and plain,
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,
Shall feel an overseeing power
To kindle or restrain.

"She shall be sportive as the fawn
That wild with glee across the lawn
Or up the mountain springs;
And hers shall be the breathing balm,[1]
And hers the silence and the calm,
Of mute insensate things.

"The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her, for her the willow bend;
Nor shall she fail to see
E'en in the motions of the storm
Grace that shall mould the maiden's form
By silent sympathy.

"The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.

"And vital[2] feelings of delight
Shall rear her form to stately height,
Her virgin bosom swell;

1 The power of soothing and comforting.
2 Vital—Life-giving.

Such thoughts to Lucy I will give
While she and I together live
  Here in this happy dell."

Thus Nature spake. The work was done,—
How soon my Lucy's race was run!
  She died and left to me
This heath, this calm and quiet scene;
The memory of what has been,
  And nevermore will be.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

THE EDUCATION OF NATURE

From *There Was a Child Went Forth*

There was a child went forth every day
And the first object he looked upon, that object he became,
And that object became part of him for the day,
  Or a certain part of the day,
Or for many years or stretching cycles of years.

The early lilacs became part of this child,
And grass, and white and red morning glories.
  And white and red clover, and the song of the phœbe-bird,
And the noisy brood of the barnyard or by the mire of the pondside,
And the fish suspending themselves so curiously below there,
  And the beautiful curious liquid.

And the water-plants with their graceful flat heads,
All became part of him.

And the apple-tree covered with blossoms and the fruit afterward,
And wood-berries and the commonest weeds by the road,
The hurrying, tumbling waves, quick-broken crests, slapping
The horizon's edge, the flying sea-crow, the fragrance of salt marsh and sea mud,—
These became part of that child who went forth every day, and
Who now goes, and will always go forth every day.

WALT WHITMAN.

THE BAREFOOT BOY

Blessings on thee, little man,
Barefoot boy, with cheek of tan!
With thy turned-up pantaloons,
And thy merry whistled tunes;
With thy red lip, redder still
Kissed by strawberries on the hill
With the sunshine on thy face,
Through thy torn brim's jaunty grace;
From my heart I give thee joy,—
I was once a barefoot boy!
Prince thou art,—the grown-up man
Only is republican.
Let the million-dollared ride!
Barefoot, trudging at his side,

Thou hast more than he can buy
In the reach of ear and eye,—
Outward sunshine, inward joy:
Blessings on thee, barefoot boy!

O for boyhood's painless play,
Sleep that wakes in laughing day,
Health that mocks the doctor's rules,
Knowledge never learned of schools,
Of the wild bee's morning chase,
Of the wild-flower's time and place,
Flight of fowl and habitude
Of the tenants of the wood;
How the tortoise bears his shell,
How the woodchuck digs his cell
And the ground-mole sinks his well;
How the robin feeds her young,
How the oriole's nest is hung;
Where the whitest lilies blow,[1]
Where the freshest berries grow,
Where the ground-nut trails its vine,
Where the wood-grape's clusters shine;
Of the black wasp's cunning way,
Mason of his walls of clay,
And the architectural plans
Of gray hornet artisans!—
For, eschewing books and tasks,
Nature answers all he asks;
Hand in hand with her he walks,
Face to face with her he talks,
Part and parcel of her joy,—
Blessings on the barefoot boy!

1 **Blow**—Blossom.

O for boyhood's time of June,
Crowding years in one brief moon,
When all things I heard or saw,
Me, their master, waited for.
I was rich in flowers and trees,
Humming-birds and honey-bees;
For my sport the squirrel played,
Plied the snouted mole his spade;
For my taste the blackberry cone
Purpled over hedge and stone:
Laughed the brook for my delight
Through the day and through the night,
Whispering at the garden wall,
Talked with me from fall to fall;
Mine the sand-rimmed pickerel pond,
Mine, the walnut slopes beyond,
Mine, on bending orchard trees,
Apples of Hesperides[1]!
Still as my horizon grew,
Larger grew my riches too;
All the world I saw or knew
Seemed a complex Chinese toy,
Fashioned for a barefoot boy!

O for festal dainties spread,
Like my bowl of milk and bread,—
Pewter spoon and bowl of wood,
On the door-stone, gray and rude!
O'er me, like a regal tent,
Cloudy-ribbed, the sunset bent,
Purple-curtained, fringed with gold,
Looped in many a wind-swung fold;

[1] **Hesperides**—Fabled garden producing golden apples.

While for music came the play
Of the pied frogs' orchestra
And, to light the noisy choir,
Lit the fly his lamp of fire.
I was monarch: pomp and joy
Waited on the barefoot boy!

Cheerily, then, my little man,
Live and laugh, as boyhood can!
Though the flinty slopes be hard,
Stubble-speared the new-mown sward,
Every morn shall lead thee through
Fresh baptisms of the dew;
Every evening from thy feet
Shall the cool wind kiss the heat.
All too soon these feet must hide
In the prison cells of pride,
Lose the freedom of the sod,
Like a colt's for work be shod,
Made to tread the mills of toil,
Up and down in ceaseless moil:
Happy if their track be found
Never on forbidden ground;
Happy if they sink not in
Quick and treacherous sands of sin.
Ah! that thou couldst know thy joy,
Ere it passes, barefoot boy!

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

NATURE AND THE FARMER

From *Musketaquid*

Beneath low hills, in the broad interval
Through which at will our Indian rivulet

Winds mindful still of sannup[1] and of squaw,
Whose pipe and arrow oft the plough unburies,—
Here in pine houses built of new-fallen trees,
Supplanters of the tribe, the farmers dwell.
Traveller, to thee, perchance a tedious road,
Or, it may be, a picture; to these men,
The landscape is an armoury of powers,
Which, one by one, they know to draw and use.
They harness beast, bird, insect[2] to their work;
They prove the virtues of each bed of rock,
And, like the chemist, mid his loaded jars,
Draw from each stratum its adapted use
To drug their crops or weapon their arts withal.
They turn the frost upon their chemic heap,
They set the wind to winnow pulse and grain,
They thank the spring-flood for its fertile slime.
Earlier, on cheap summit-levels of the snow,[3]
Slide with the sledge to inaccessible[4] woods
O'er meadows bottomless. So, year by year,
They fight the elements with elements.

What these strong masters wrote at large in miles
I followed in small copy in my acre;
For there 's no rood has not a star above it;
The cordial[5] quality of pear or plum
Ascends as gladly in a single tree
As in broad orchards resonant with bees;
And every atom poises for itself,

1 **Sannup**—A married Indian man.

2 Bees gather honey for the farmer, and fertilise blossoms of fruit-trees and of clover for him. Birds eat injurious insects.

3 The snow makes a good road that costs nothing.

4 These woods are inaccessible for wagons in summer time because surrounded by marshy meadows, which are frozen in winter.

5 **Cordial**—Tonic, strengthening.

And for the whole. The gentle deities
Showed me the lore of colours and of sounds,
The innumerable tenements of beauty,
The miracle of generative force,
Far-reaching concords of astronomy
Felt in the plants, and in the punctual birds;
Better, the linked purpose of the whole,
And, chiefest prize, found I true liberty
In the glad home plain-dealing nature gave.
The polite found me impolite; the great
Would mortify me, but in vain. All my hurts
My garden spade can heal. A woodland walk,
A quest of river-grapes, a mocking thrush,
A wild rose, or rock-loving columbine,
Salve my worst wounds.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

SCIENCE WITHOUT POETRY

From *Blight*

These young scholars who invade our hills,
Bold as the engineer who fells the wood,
And travelling often in the cut he makes,
Love not the flower they pluck, and know it not,
And all their botany is Latin names.
The old men studied magic in the flower,
And human fortunes in astronomy,
And an omnipotence in chemistry,
Preferring things to names; for these were men.
Our eyes
Are armed,[1] but we are strangers to the stars,

[1] **Armed**—i.e. with the telescope and microscope.

And strangers to the mystic beast and bird,
And strangers to the plant and to the mine.
The injured elements say "Not in us;"
And night and day, ocean and continent,
Fire, plant and mineral, say "Not in us,"
And haughtily return us stare for stare.
For we invade them impiously for gain,[1]
We devastate them unreligiously,
And coldly ask their pottage, not their love.
Therefore they shove us from them, yield to us
Only what to our griping toil is due.
But the sweet affluence of love and song,
The rich results of the divine consents
Of man and earth, of world beloved and lover,
The nectar and ambrosia, are withheld.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

NATURE'S HIGHER GIFTS

From *The Mountain Path*

What the soul needs,
It takes to itself,—aromas, sounds, and sights,
Beliefs and hopes; finds star-tracks through the night,
And miracles in weeds;

Grows unawares
To greatness, through small help and accidents,
Puzzling the pedagogue routine, whose tents
It leaves for manlier cares.

[1] Study them to gain knowledge, not because of appreciation of them.

And by the light
Of some great law that shines in passing facts,
Some nobler purpose blending with our acts,
We read our tasks aright.

CHRISTOPHER PEARSE CRANCH.

OUR DEBT TO NATURE

From *An Invocation*

We are what suns and winds and waters make us;
The mountains are our sponsors, and the rills
Fashion and win their nursling with their smiles.
But where the land is dim from tyranny,
There tiny pleasures occupy the place
Of glories and of duties; as the feet
Of fabled faeries, when the sun goes down,
Trip o'er the grass where wrestlers strove by day.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

EARTH'S SILENCES

How dear to hearts by hurtful noises scarred
The stillness of the many-leaved trees,
The quiet of green hills, the million-starred
Tranquillity of night, the endless seas
Of silence in deep wilds, where nature broods
In large, serene, uninterrupted moods.

Oh, but to work as orchards work—bring forth
Pink bloom, green bud, red fruit and yellow leaf,

As noiselessly as gold proclaims its worth,
Or as the pale blade turns to russet sheaf,
Or splendid sun goes down the glowing west,
Still as forgotten memories in the breast.

How without panting effort, painful word,
Comes the enchanting miracle of snow,
Making a sleeping ocean. None have heard
Its waves, its surf, its foam, its overflow;
For unto every heart, all hot and wild,
It seems to say, "Oh, hush thee, hush, my child."

ETHELWYN WETHERALD.

ART AND NATURE

From *Fra Lippo Lippi*

For, don't you mark? we're made so that we love,
First when we see them painted, things we have passed
Perhaps a hundred times nor cared to see;
And so they are better, painted—better to us,
Which is the same thing. Art was given for that;
God uses us to help each other so,
Lending our minds out.

ROBERT BROWNING.

NATURE AND THE HOME

A WISH

Mine be a cot beside the hill;
A beehive's hum shall soothe my ear;
A willowy brook that turns a mill,
With many a fall shall linger near.

The swallow, oft, beneath my thatch
Shall twitter from her clay-built nest;
Oft shall the pilgrim lift the latch,
And share my meal, a welcome guest.

Around my ivied porch shall spring
Each fragrant flower that drinks the dew;
And Lucy, at her wheel, shall sing
In russet gown and apron blue.

The village-church among the trees,
Where first our marriage-vows were given,
With merry peals shall swell the breeze
And point with taper spire to heaven.

SAMUEL ROGERS.

ODE TO SOLITUDE

Happy the man whose wish and care
A few paternal acres bound,
Content to breathe his native air
In his own ground.

Whose herds with milk, whose fields with bread,
Whose flocks supply him with attire;
Whose trees in summer yield him shade,
In winter, fire.

Blest, who can unconcern'dly find
Hours, days, and years slide soft away
In health of body, peace of mind,
Quiet by day,

Sound sleep by night; study and ease
Together mixed; sweet recreation,

And innocence, which most does please
With meditation.

Thus let me live, unseen, unknown;
Thus unlamented let me die;
Steal from the world, and not a stone
Tell where I lie.

ALEXANDER POPE.

CORRYMEELA

By permission, from *Songs of the Glensof Antrim* by Moira O'Neill

Over here in England[1] I'm helpin' wi' the hay,
An' I wisht I was in Ireland the livelong day;
Weary on the English hay, an' sorra take the wheat!
Och! Corrymeela an' the blue sky over it.

There 's a deep dumb river flowin' by beyont the heavy trees,
This livin' air is moithered[2] wi' the bummin' o' the bees,
I wisht I'd hear the Claddagh burn[3] go runnin' through the heat
Past Corrymeela, wi' the blue sky over it.

The people that 's in England is richer nor the Jews,
There 's not the smallest young gossoon but thravels[4] in his shoes!

1 The speaker is sorry he came over to England to help in the haying and wheat harvest.

2 **Moithered**—Filled to confusion.

3 **Burn**—Stream.

4 **Thravels in**—Walks in, wears continually.

I'd give the pipe between me teeth to see a barefut child,
Och! Corrymeela an' the low south wind.

Here 's hands so full o' money an' hearts so full o' care,
By the luck o' love! I'd still go light for all I did go bare.[1]
"God save ye, *colleen*[2] *dhas*,[3]" I said: the girl she thought me wild.
Far Corrymeela, an' the low south wind.

D'ye mind me now, the song at night is mortial hard to raise,
The girls are heavy goin'[4] here, the boys are ill to plase;
When one'st I'm out this workin' hive, 'tis I'll be back again—
Ay, Corrymeela, in the same soft rain.

The puff o' smoke from one ould roof before an English town!
For a *shaugh*[5] wid Andy Feelan here I'd give a silver crown,
For a curl o' hair like Mollie's ye'll ask the like in vain,
Sweet Corrymeela, an' the same soft rain.

MOIRA O'NEILL.[6]

1 I would rather be light-hearted though I were poor also.

2 **Colleen**—A girl.

3 **Dhas**—Pretty.

4 **Heavy goin'**—Lacking in liveliness.

5 **Shaugh**—A smoke of the pipe, a sociable time.

6 **Moira O'Neill** is a pen-name. The writer is Mrs. Walter Skrine, living of late at Pincher Creek, Alberta. She is a native of Ireland, where she at present lives.

THE LAKE ISLE OF INNISFREE

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made;
Nine bean rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night or day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS.

ADIEU, ADIEU! MY NATIVE SHORE

Adieu, adieu! my native shore
Fades o'er the waters blue;
The night-winds sigh, the breakers roar,
And shrieks the wild sea-mew.
Yon sun that sets upon the sea
We follow in his flight;

Farewell awhile to him and thee,
My native Land—Good Night!

A few short hours, and he will rise
To give the morrow birth;
And I shall hail the main and skies,
But not my mother earth.
Deserted is my own good hall,
Its hearth is desolate;
Wild winds are gathering on the wall;
My dog howls at the gate.

GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON.

THE HAPPIEST SPOT

From *The Traveller*

But where to find that happiest spot below,
Who can direct, when all pretend to know?
The shuddering tenant of the frigid zone
Boldly proclaims that happiest spot his own;
Extols the treasures of his stormy seas,
And his long nights of revelry and ease:
The naked negro, panting at the line,
Boasts of his golden sands and palmy wine,
Basks in the glare, or stems the tepid wave,
And thanks his gods for all the good they gave.
Such is the patriot's boast, where'er we roam,
His first, best country, ever is at home.
And yet, perhaps, if countries we compare,
And estimate the blessings which they share,
Though patriots flatter, still shall wisdom find
An equal portion dealt to all mankind;
As different good, by art or nature given,
To different nations makes their blessing even.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

THE VALE OF AVOCA[1]

There is not in this wide world a valley so sweet
As that vale in whose bosom the bright waters meet;
Oh, the last ray of feeling and life must depart
Ere the bloom of that valley shall fade from my heart!

Yet it was not that Nature had shed o'er the scene
Her purest of crystal and brightest of green;
'Twas not the soft magic of streamlet or hill,—
Oh, no! it was something more exquisite still.

'Twas that friends, the beloved of my bosom, were near,
Who made every dear scene of enchantment more dear,
And who felt how the best charms of nature improve,
When we see them reflected from looks that we love.

Sweet Vale of Avoca! how calm could I rest
In thy bosom of shade, with the friends I love best;
Where the storms that we feel in this cold world should cease,
And our hearts, like thy waters, be mingled in peace.

THOMAS MOORE.

HOME THOUGHTS FROM ABROAD

Oh, to be in England now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England sees, some morning unaware,

[1] **Avoca**—Small river in Wicklow county, Ireland.

That the lowest boughs and the brush-wood sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England—now!

And after April, when May follows,
And the white-throat builds, and all the swallows!
Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent spray's edge—
That 's the wise thrush: he sings each song twice over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture!
And, though the fields look rough with hoary dew,
All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
The buttercups, the little children's dower,
Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower!

ROBERT BROWNING.

GOOD-BYE.[1]

Good-bye, proud world, I'm going home:
Thou art not my friend, and I'm not thine.
Long through thy weary crowds I roam;
A river-ark on the ocean brine,
Long I've been tossed like the driven foam;
But now, proud world! I'm going home.

Good-bye to Flattery's fawning face;
To Grandeur with his wise grimace;
To upstart Wealth's averted eye;
To supple Office, low and high;

[1] The poet is leaving Boston to live in retirement in the village of Concord.

To crowded halls, to court and street;
To frozen hearts and hasting feet;
To those who go, and those who come;
Good-bye, proud world! I'm going home.

I'm going to my own hearth-stone,
Bosomed in yon green hills alone,—
A secret nook in a pleasant land,
Whose groves the frolic fairies planned;
Where arches green, the livelong day,
Echo the blackbird's roundelay,
And vulgar feet have never trod
A spot that is sacred to thought and God.

O, when I am safe in my sylvan home,
I tread on the pride of Greece and Rome;
And when I am stretched beneath the pines,
Where the evening star so holy shines,
I laugh at the lore and the pride of man,
At the sophist schools and the learned clan;
For what are they all, in their high conceit,
When man in the bush with God may meet?

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

MY COUNTRY

There is a land, of every land the pride,
Beloved by Heaven o'er all the world beside,
Where brighter suns dispense serener light,
And milder moons imparadise the night;
A land of beauty, virtue, valour, truth,
Time-tutored age, and love-exalted youth:

The wandering mariner, whose eye explores
The wealthiest isles, the most enchanting shores,
Views not a realm so bountiful and fair,
Nor breathes the spirit of a purer air.
In every clime, the magnet of his soul,
Touched by remembrance, trembles to that pole;
For in this land of Heaven's peculiar race,
The heritage of nature's noblest grace,
There is a spot of earth supremely blest,
A dearer, sweeter spot than all the rest,
Where man, creation's tyrant, casts aside
His sword and sceptre, pageantry and pride,
While in his softened looks benignly blend
The sire, the son, the husband, brother, friend.
Here woman reigns; the mother, daughter, wife,
Strew with fresh flowers the narrow way of life:
In the clear heaven of her delightful eye
An angel-guard of love and graces lie;
Around her knees domestic duties meet,
And fireside pleasures gambol at her feet.
"Where shall that land, that spot of earth be found?"
Art thou a man?—a patriot?—look around;
Oh, thou shalt find, howe'er thy footsteps roam,
That land thy country, and that spot thy home!

* * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Man, through all ages of revolving time,
Unchanging man, in every varying clime,
Deems his own land of every land the pride,
Beloved by Heaven o'er all the world beside;
His home the spot of earth supremely blest,
A dearer, sweeter spot than all the rest.

JAMES MONTGOMERY.

AT WAKING

When I shall go to sleep and wake again
  At dawning in another world than this,
  What will atone to me for all I miss?
The light melodious footsteps of the rain,
The press of leaves against my window pane,
  The sunset wistfulness and morning bliss,
  The moon's enchantment and the twilight kiss
Of winds that wander with me through the lane.

Will not my soul remember evermore
  The earthly winter's hunger for the spring,
  The wet sweet cheek of April, and the rush
Of roses through the summer's open door;
  The feelings that the scented woodlands bring
  At evening with the singing of the thrush?

ETHELWYN WETHERALD.

COMPENSATION

In that new world toward which our feet are set
Shall we find aught to make our hearts forget
Earth's homely joys and her bright hours of bliss!
Has Heaven a spell divine enough for this?
For who the pleasures of the spring shall tell,
When on the leafless stock the brown buds swell,
When the grass brightens, and the days grow long,
And little birds break out in rippling song?

O sweet the drooping eve, the blush of morn,
The starlit sky, the rustling fields of corn,

The soft airs blowing from the freshing seas,
The sun-flecked shadow of the stately trees,
The mellow thunder and the lulling rain,
The warm, delicious, happy summer rain,
When the grass brightens, and the days grow long,
And little birds break out in rippling song!

O beauty manifold, from morn till night,
Dawn's flush, noon's blaze, and sunset's tender light!
O fair familiar features, changes sweet,
Of her revolving seasons, storm and sleet,
And golden calm, as slow she wheels through space
From snow to roses; and how dear her face,
When the grass brightens, and the days grow long,
And the little birds break out in rippling song!

O happy earth! O home so well beloved!
What recompense have we, from thee removed?
One hope we have that overtops the whole,
The hope of finding every vanished soul
We love and long for daily; and for this
Gladly we turn from thee, and all thy bliss,
Even at thy loveliest, when the days are long,
And the little birds break out in rippling song.

CELIA THAXTER.

HARMONY IN NATURE

From *Each and All*

All are needed by each one;
Nothing is fair or good alone.
I thought the sparrow's note from heaven,
Singing at dawn on the alder bough;

I brought him home, in his nest, at even;
He sings the song, but it cheers not now,
For I did not bring home the river and sky;—
He sang to my ear,—they sang to my eye.
The delicate shells lay on the shore;
The bubbles of the latest wave
Fresh pearls to their enamel gave;
And the bellowing of the savage sea
Greeted their safe escape to me.
I wiped away the weeds and foam,
I fetched my sea-born treasures home;
But the poor, unsightly, noisome things
Had left their beauty on the shore,
With the sun and the sand and the wild uproar.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

THE COUNTRY FAITH

Here in the country's heart
Where the grass is green,
Life is the same sweet life
As it e'er hath been.

Trust in a God still lives,
And the bell at morn
Floats with a thought of God
O'er the rising corn.

God comes down in the rain,
And the crop grows tall—
This is the country faith,
And the best of all!

NORMAN GALE.

DOVER CLIFFS

From *King Lear*

Come on, sir; here's the p a e: stand stil!
How fearful
And dizzy 'tis to cast one s eyes so low!
The crows and choughs that wing the midway air
Show scarce so gross as beetles: halfway down
Hangs one that gathers sampheir, dreadful trade!
Methinks he seems no bigger than his head:
The fishermen that walk upon the beach
Appear like mice; and yon tall anchoring bark,
Diminished to her cock[1]; her cock, a buoy
Almost too small for sight: the murmuring surge,
That on the unnumbered idle pebbles chafes,
Cannot be heard so high. I'll look no more;
Lest my brain turn, and the deficient sight
Topple down headlong.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

THE ORIENT

From *The Bride of Abydos*

Know ye the land where the cypress and myrtle
Are emblems of deeds that are done in their clime;
Where the rage of the vulture, the love of the turtle,[2]
Now melt into sorrow, now madden to crime?
Know ye the land of the cedar and vine,

1 **Cock**—A small boat.
2 **Turtle**—Turtle-dove.

Where the flowers ever blossom, the beams ever shine;
Where the light wings of Zephyr, oppressed with perfume,
Wax faint o'er the gardens of Gul in her bloom?
Where the citron[1] and olive are airest of fruit,
And the voice of the nightingale never is mute;
Where the tints of the earth, and the hues of the sky,
In colour though varied, in beauty may vie,
And the purple of ocean is deepest in dye;
Where the virgins are soft as the roses they twine,
And all, save the spirit of man, is divine?
'Tis the clime of the East; 'tis the land of the Sun,—
Can he smile on such deeds as his children have done?

GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON.

THE PRAIRIES

From *Evangeline*

Spreading between these streams are the wondrous, beautiful prairies,
Billowy bays of grass ever rolling in shadow and sunshine,
Bright with luxuriant clusters of roses and purple amorphas.
Over them wandered the buffalo herds, and the elk and the roebuck;
Over them wandered the wolves, and herds of riderless horses;
Fires that blast and blight, and winds that are weary with travel;

[1] **Citron**—A fruit similar to a lemon.

Over them wander the scattered tribes of Ishmael's children,
Staining the desert with blood; and above their terrible war-trails,
Circles and sails aloft, on pinions majestic, the vulture,
Like the implacable soul of a chieftain slaughtered in battle,
By invisible stairs ascending and scaling the heavens.
Here and there rise smokes from the camps of these savage marauders;
Here and there rise groves from the margins of swift-running rivers;
And the grim, taciturn bear, the anchorite monk of the desert,
Climbs down their dark ravines to dig for roots by the brook-side,
And over all is the sky, the clear and crystalline heaven,
Like the protecting hand of God inverted above them.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

THE PRAIRIES

These are the gardens of the desert, these
The unshorn fields, boundless and beautiful,
For which the speech of England has no name—
The prairies. I behold them for the first,
And my heart swells, while the dilated sight
Takes in the encircling vastness. Lo! they stretch
In airy undulations, far away,
As if the ocean, in his gentlest swell,

Stood still, with all his rounded billows fixed,
And motionless forever.—Motionless?—
No—they are all unchained again. The clouds
Sweep over with their shadows, and, beneath,
The surface rolls and fluctuates to the eye;
Dark hollows seem to glide along and chase
The sunny ridges. Breezes of the south!
Who toss the golden and the flame-like flowers,
And pass the prairie hawk that, poised on high,
Flaps his broad wings, yet moves not—ye have played
Among the palms of Mexico and vines
Of Texas, and have crisped the limpid brooks
That from the fountains of Sonora glide
Into the calm Pacific—have ye fanned
A nobler or a lovelier scene than this?
Man hath no part in all this glorious work:
The hand that built the firmament hath heaved
And smoothed these verdant swells, and sown their slopes
With herbage, planted them with island groves,
And hedged them round with forests. Fitting floor
For this magnificent temple of the sky—
With flowers whose glory and whose multitude
Rival the constellations! The great heavens
Seem to stoop down upon the scene in love,—
A nearer vault, and of a tenderer blue,
Than that which bends above the eastern hills.

As o'er the verdant waste I guide my steed,
Among the high, rank grass that sweeps his sides,
The hollow beating of his footstep seems
A sacrilegious sound. I think of those
Upon whose rest he tramples. Are they here—

The dead of other days?—and did the dust
Of these fair solitudes once stir with life
And burn with passion? Let the mighty mounds
That overlook the rivers, or that rise
In the dim forest, crowded with old oaks,
Answer. A race that long has passed away
Built them;—a disciplined and populous race
Heaped, with long toil, the earth, while yet the Greek
Was hewing the Pentelicus[1] to forms
Of symmetry, and rearing on its rock
The glittering Parthenon.[2] These ample fields
Nourished their harvests; here their herds were fed,
When haply by their stalls the bison lowed,
And bowed his maned shoulder to the yoke.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Thus change the forms of being. Thus arise
Races of living things, glorious in strength,
And perish, as the quickening breath of God
Fills them or is withdrawn. The red man, too,
Has left the blooming wilds he ranged so long,
And nearer to the Rocky Mountains sought
A wider hunting-ground. The beaver builds
No longer by these streams; but far away,
On waters whose blue surface ne'er gave back
The white man's face—among Missouri's springs,
And pools whose issues swell the Oregon—
He rears his little Venice. In these plains
The bison feeds no more. Twice twenty leagues
Beyond remotest smoke of hunter's camp,

1 **Pentelicus**—A mountain near Athens from which the finest of marble was taken.

2 **Parthenon**—The beautiful temple of Pallas Athene, which crowned the Acropolis at Athens.

Roams the majestic brute, in herds that shake
The earth with thundering steps—yet here I meet
His ancient footprints stamped beside the pool.

Still this great solitude is quick with life.
Myriads of insects, gaudy as the flowers
They flutter over, gentle quadrupeds,
And birds, that scarce have learned the fear of man,
Are here, and sliding reptiles of the ground,
Startlingly beautiful. The graceful deer
Bounds to the wood at my approach. The bee,
A more adventurous colonist than man,
With whom he came across the eastern deep,
Fills the savannas with his murmurings,
And hides his sweets, as in the golden age,
Within the hollow oak. I listen long
To his domestic hum, and think I hear
The sound of that advancing multitude
Which soon shall fill these deserts. From the ground
Comes up the laugh of children, the soft voice
Of maidens, and the sweet and solemn hymn
Of Sabbath worshippers. The low of herds
Blends with the rustling of the heavy grain
Over the dark-brown furrows. All at once
A fresher wind sweeps by, and breaks my dream,
And I am in the wilderness alone.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

conjuring - magic artó

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